Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

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- **IPI faces another possible receivership.** **PAGE 3**

**'WE WILL NEVER FORGET'**
To honor and commemorate the heroes who lost their lives during the 9/11 tragedy, gold star families, dozens of dignitaries, government officials, community members, and first responders such as the members of the Department of Fire and Medical Services, the Department of Public Safety, and members of the U.S. Navy Sea Cadets join Gov. Arnold I Palacios, House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho, Tan Holdings CEO Jerry Tan and company vice president for Community Relations Catherine Attao-Toves yesterday at the Court of Honor in the American Memorial Park in Garapan for the 8th We Will Never Forget: Field of Heroes commemoration.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

# Senate unanimously passes budget bill version

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Manglona

Nabors

The full Senate unanimously passed yesterday afternoon their version of a budget bill for the government's operations for fiscal year 2024.

With all eight senators present voting "yes" for the adoption of the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's budget bill version at a session, House Bill No. 23-66, version House Substitute 1, Senate Substitute 1, as amended, passed

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## HANMI backs CPA's efforts to bring back China market

**'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN**
**Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:**
**18**

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has expressed its support for the Commonwealth Ports Authority's efforts to bring back the China market.

Previously, the CPA board unanimously voted in favor of securing an exemption for the CNMI from the United States Department of Transportation's China Part Order 213 which essentially restricts flights from China entering the United States and its territories.

According to a letter from HANMI addressed to CPA, HANMI wants the CPA to lobby for the exemption of

*See HANMI on Page 4*

## Homegrown magician wins Alaska's Got Talent

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

Homegrown magician Neil Fama, also known as the "Island Showman," took home first place in Alaska's Got Talent competition last Sept. 4 during their state fair in Palmer Alaska.

Fama, who is currently living in Alaska and serving in the U.S. Air Force, shared with *Saipan Tribune*

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Neil "Island Showman" Fama, 2017 and 2021 CNMI's Got Talent champion, won first place in Alaska's Got Talent competition last Sept. 4 in Palmer, Alaska.

## INSIDE

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Americans are looking back on the horror and legacy of 9/11, gathering at memorials, firehouses, city halls and elsewhere.
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**OVERDRIVE**
I drove a Plum Crazy-painted 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak on Woodward all weekend.
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**LIFE & STYLE**
"The Nun II" topped the box office in its first weekend in North American theaters earning an estimated $32.6 million.
**PAGE 15**

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

# Local

## Kingman says motion for his disqualification was 'frivolous'

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Assistant Attorney General, previously OAG special prosecutor, James Kingman says former governor Ralph DLG Torres' motion to disqualify him on claims of "unauthorized practice of law" is frivolous.

Yesterday, the parties in the ongoing criminal case against former governor Torres went before Superior Court judge pro tem Arthur Barcinas for a motion hearing. During the hearing, parties argued their stance on the defense's pending motion to dismiss or, alternatively, disqualify Kingman from prosecuting the case.

According to Kingman, the motion itself is frivolous and should not have even had a hearing in the first place.

"The judge wanted [a hearing] and that's fine. I was happy to make the arguments," he said.

Meanwhile, according to defense attorney Anthony Aguon, he claims stern sanctions like dismissal or disqualification is warranted in this case because the OAG is not above the law and must abide by the same laws they swore to uphold.

In this case, the defense claims, they did not abide by the law by allowing Kingman to prosecute the case without requiring him to take the oath that authorizes him to practice law in the CNMI. Because of this, the defense claims that Torres was severely prejudiced.

Barcinas, for his part, took the matter under advisement and will issue a ruling on the matter.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the defense team of former governor Torres wants the Superior Court to dismiss the criminal suit filed against their client due to the alleged unauthorized practice of law on the part of special prosecutor Kingman.

As a possible alternative to disqualifying Kingman, Torres' defense team is asking the Superior Court to consider dismissing the former governor's criminal case altogether because the prosecution's alleged misconduct throughout the case has "incurably prejudiced" Torres.

The misconduct Torres' defense team is alluding to in its motion is Kingman's alleged failure to take the attorney oath authorizing him to practice law in the CNMI, and the misuse of subpoena powers that exposed Torres' bank account information.

Kingman, for his part, argues that the motion should be denied as it lacks any basis in fact or law.

Kingman further argues that dismissal with prejudice is an absurd proposed remedy as it is not based in law.

Torres has been charged by the Office of the Attorney General with 12 counts of misconduct in public office and one count of theft relating to the issuance of airline tickets for business class, first class, or other premium class travel for himself and/or Diann T. Torres, his wife.

The complaint also includes theft charges related to the former governor's travel expenses amounting to $20,000 between April 2018 and May 30, 2019, using public funds.

The case likewise alleged one count of contempt for failure to appear in compliance with a legislative subpoena.

Torres has denied the charges.

In September 2022, judge pro tem Alberto Tolentino dismissed without prejudice the contempt charge against Torres. Without prejudice means the charge can be refiled.

## $6K bail imposed for man accused of attacking another man with machete

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $6,000 cash bail on a man accused of attacking another man with a machete. The man is set to be arraigned on Sept. 18 after he waived his right to a preliminary hearing.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan recently imposed a $6,000 cash bail on Vince Santer Camacho, a man who was arrested for attacking another man with a machete on Aug. 29 in Garapan.

Camacho, 37, is currently facing charges of disturbing the peace, assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and resisting arrest.

Camacho, who recently waived his right to a preliminary hearing, was ordered to return to court on Sept. 18 for his arraignment.

Camacho currently remains in Department of Corrections custody pending further court proceedings.

According to court documents, a male relative told police that he was walking home from a beach when he passed the defendant who was drinking alcohol with three other people.

The relative said he did not talk to them but Camacho started cursing at him in Chuukese.

He said he did not pay attention because he knew that Camacho was drunk and continued walking home.

When the male relative got to his apartment, he said Camacho started throwing rocks at his unit.

According to the victim, when he walked out to the balcony, he saw Camacho walking toward his building with a machete in his hand.

The victim said he saw two men standing outside of the building and asked them to call the police.

He said he told Camacho multiple times to stay out of his unit but Camacho did not listen and even threatened to cut him.

The victim said Camacho walked toward the apartment unit and swung the machete at him three times but missed him.

Police noted that Camacho was still shouting at his male relative when they arrived.

Police also added that Camacho was uncooperative and continued to curse at his male relative as he was being restrained and handcuffed.

# IPI faces another possible receivership

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC faces another possible receivership to auction off millions worth of its personal property.

Last week, IPI former employee Joshua Gray, through attorneys Aaron Halegua and Bruce Berline, filed a petition for an order to show cause to appoint a limited receiver to sell IPI's personal property.

Specifically, Gray is petitioning the U.S. District Court for the NMI to issue an order compelling IPI to justify why Clear Management Ltd. should not be appointed as limited receiver to sell IPI's personal property which were seized through a writ of execution previously granted in his Gray's favor.

In addition, Gray wants the court to order IPI to comply with Clear Management in all respects, if the petition for receivership is granted, and to prohibit the casino investor from obstructing Clear Management so that maximum value may be obtained from the sale of its assets.

"As IPI still has not paid the [over $5 million] judgment, plaintiff now petitions the Court, pursuant to federal and local rules, to issue an order to show cause why the court should not appoint Clear Management as limited receiver with all the necessary authority to effectuate the liquidation of the personal property subject to the writ, and direct IPI to cooperate in all respects with the limited receiver to effectuate the liquidation of that property," said the petition.

Gray, through his lawyers, asked that the court grant his motion as soon as possible as IPI's personal property only continues to deteriorate.

"Since the value of IPI's motor vehicles, liquor, furniture and equipment, and crystal dragons deteriorates each day, and IPI's assets are not adequately secured, plaintiff requests that this motion be granted quickly," said the petition.

Aside from the fact that IPI's personal property only continues to deteriorate, Gray and his lawyers argue that the court should grant their motion quickly as there is already evidence of potential fraudulent conduct by IPI.

"Since the time that IPI provided its initial list of motor vehicles, by the time a writ was executed on those assets in the Wang and Fanter cases, many of the vehicles could no longer be found," said the petition.

Also, Gray's attorneys argue that without the appointment of a receiver to liquidate IPI's personal property, the plaintiff will not see his judgment satisfied; but will instead be left holding a hollow piece paper.

"IPI has offered no alternative plan for paying plaintiff," said Gray's attorneys. [These] factors strongly favor the court granting the motion to appoint Clear Management as the limited receiver to liquidate IPI's personal property subject to the writ," said the petition.

On May 31, 2023, the Dis-

See IPI on Page 4

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# DeLeon Guerrero explains further importance of invoking FOIA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said yesterday that knowing the expenses that were expended by the CNMI government with respect to all the disasters and also for reimbursements that the Commonwealth received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is important during their deliberations with respect to the fiscal year 2024 budget.

Commenting at the Senate session on why she invoked Freedom of Information Act with FEMA to get such information, DeLeon Guerrero said it's important that they know exactly how much money the CNMI has spent, how much money it has received, and how much it is spending for reimbursement.

The Senate president wrote last week a letter addressed to the FOIA officer in Washington, D.C., requesting for documents regarding FEMA's reimbursements for CNMI expenditures since 2018 pertaining to Typhoon Mangkhut, Super Typhoon Yutu, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

DeLeon Guerrero said yesterday that there are about 35 employees that are being currently trained to proceed with the tax collections and tax enforcement of the Commonwealth.

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

## SENATE

*From page 1*

the full Senate.

Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) was absent but excused from the session.

There is a strong possibility that the House of Representatives is going to reject the Senate version during their next session. If that happens, a bicameral conference committee will be formed to reach a mutually agreed budget legislation.

Before the Senate passed their version of the budget bill, they adopted three floor amendments offered by Sens. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian).

Before the adoption of the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's version of the budget bill and its subsequent passage, Sen. Donald Manglona, who chairs the committee, briefly discussed the major changes that they made.

Manglona said they added a provision that would kind of regulate the donation of sick leave to match and have the rate of the donation correlate with the base rate of the recipient or the donor's salary.

Manglona said they included a provision to have the Executive Branch address all utilities for the municipalities as well as all departments within the Executive Branch.

As far as legal holidays, he said the committee felt that they should identify a number not to exceed and that number is five.

Manglona said they exempted the Legislature and the Judiciary in the event that they have outside source funds or additional funds under their personnel allocation that could cover these lengthy legal holidays.

He said any suspension to the holidays would come from the Executive Branch should the governor choose to suspend any of the holidays.

Under the marriage license fee, Manglona said the House proposed to increase such fee by 100%.

He said the committee took that out because they kind of felt like this is similar to an increase in Business Gross Revenue Tax that they fought hard to take out of the budget bill and feel that this should be done in a separate legislation.

Manglona said they also had a provision under excepted service contracts that no excepted service contract renewal shall receive a salary increase until such time all employees are restored back to 80 hours.

He said they allowed for the Legislature and the Judiciary to establish their hours of operation.

Manglona said since they reduce the hours of the Legislature and the Judiciary to 72, they give the presiding officers of the Legislative Bureau and the judges and justices of the judicial branch to apply their austerity the way they see fit.

On Medicaid, he said they basically mirrored the provision this current fiscal year based on the concerns that were brought up by Medicaid just to allow them to move monies around in the event of a shortfall in one particular business unit.

"So. this could just give them the authority to move funds to cover down any business unit that falls short," Manglona said.

He said they removed the provision of Compact Impact funds based on information received from Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) and confirmed by Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita that the CNMI will not be receiving such funds for the next fiscal year.

Manglona said due to the decrease in net available resources from $115 million to $114 million, they had to basically take $1 million elsewhere.

He said they adjusted what's available to the Public School System by close to $300,000 and then the remaining funds were taken by the Saipan Mayor's Office to allow the mayor to use his American Rescue Plan Act funds to address his employees, and $185,000 from Medicaid match.

He said they also took close to $2.2 from Medicaid and provided $1.7 million to Tinian to cover for the 73 employees.

He said they reduced the work hours of the Legislature, Judiciary, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Defender by eight hours to assist with covering for that $1.7 million for Tinian.

Manglona said they also included close to $900,000 in Group Health Life Insurance to provide some sort of payment toward the premium owed to GHLI.

He said they took care of several municipal needs in regards to transferring of positions and correct some of the information that was omitted from the governor's proposal to restore back two positions back into the Executive Branch.

## MAGICIAN

*From page 1*

that he joined a local talent competition in Fairbanks not realizing it had been a preliminary round, in which the winners would compete in Alaska's Got Talent.

"I was just like grabbing on every opportunity to perform. Not necessarily wanting to win it's just for me to perform. I'll perform just because I love entertaining people."

He shared that he had been doing magic among friends from work and after the word spread, he began performing for work events, from there his friends encouraged him to try out at the local talent show.

"My coworkers were like 'hey there is a local talent show' and the date was like a week away…" he shared "…I just saw it as an opportunity to perform again so I just signed up and miraculously I ended up winning that. What I didn't know is that it will bring me to Alaska's Got Talent which was in Palmer…they just announced it after the competition... so yeah that was a really cool experience."

After winning the Fairbanks Got Talent which was a preliminary round, he ended up moving on to the Alaska's Got Talent in Palmer, Alaska.

He said there was definitely a lot of talent there which did cause a sprinkling of doubt, but he felt confident on his skill, and just got up to perform.

"I feel like what I bring is my personality on stage because a lot of tricks I do, you could say a lot of other magicians already know how to do… but what you can't really copy is one's uniqueness." He shared that he had learned a lot from illusionist Leon Etienne known for his appearances on Master of Illusion, America's Got Talent, and Penn and Teller: Fool us, and the Jimmy Fallon show.

Etienne had been Fama's personal mentor around the time that Etienne performed on Saipan in previous years' Sandcastle events at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

"I learned a lot from him back when we were both on Saipan. He actually mentored me for my first year in magic... he actually helped me build my routine for the first CNMI's Got Talent that I joined in 2017. How to compete, how to perform for judges, how to win the crowd."

At the end of the day Fama did win the Alaska's Got Talent crowd and first place title along with $2,500 cash.

Fama shared that he really wanted to thank the CNMI because it was here that his love for magic grew. Fama shared that as a child his father worked as a teppanyaki chief in several hotels and to collect tips he'd do other performances while cooking, one of which were magic tricks.

He then showed those tricks to a young Fama.

Fama shared that as a kid he would go to school and show his friends the tricks he just learned.

"It was just a fun thing for me like even though I knew it wasn't real magic, like most kids would think, just the wonder of that… showing something to someone and having that person think it was magic, was pretty magical to me."

Fama also loved learning new things and when he was 18 years old during a trip to K-Mart in Guam his eyes were transfixed on a bicycle deck of cards.

"I had this impulsive decision like 'oh I should get into magic.' So, I just took that one deck of cards home and just started scouring the internet like searching for the best magic tricks."

His first trick was a David Bling routine.

"I just kept focusing on learning that one trick. I wasn't learning a hundred tricks. I wasn't learning more than one…just one trick and I brought that home to Saipan and started performing that for my coworkers."

Their reaction had "just sent it home for me. Their reaction sold it to me that what I was doing was truly special. Not just their reaction… but my coworkers I give so much credit to them…"

He went on to perform in the CNMI's Got Talent in 2017 where he won first place as well as took home the Governor's Choice Award. Later in CNMI's Got Talent in 2021, he again won first place alongside Donato Santiago Jr.

"I just want to thank whoever I performed for personally in my early days, because they told me, 'this what you're doing right now is crazy, and special. Don't quit, don't quit this, keep doing this' and that was just like my first months of doing magic. I was like 'dang' and what they said stuck with me and I just never stopped."

Fama's recent win in Alaska's Got Talent really solidified that.

## HANMI

*From page 1*

the CNMI from the order that restricts the number of China-based flights coming into the United States and its territories.

"We understand through a Reuters article dated August 12, 2023, that, the U.S. Transportation Department said it will increase the number of Chinese passenger flights allowed to fly to the U.S. to 18 weekly round-trips on Sept. 1 and increase that to 24 per week starting Oct. 29, up from the current 12. Before the pandemic, flights between the CNMI and China were approved separately from flights to the rest of the U.S. We endorse a request to USDOT to reinstate this and separate the CNMI from the current limitation of flights between the USA and China," said HANMI.

HANMI notes that an exemption is the only option that would give the CNMI's tourism industry a fighting chance.

"Although the Korea market has achieved 75% of its' pre-pandemic arrivals and Japan arrivals have restarted, there are simply not enough tourist arrivals from these two markets to bring all of our hotels to a healthy occupancy level or to provide the market demand that creates a sufficient average room rate needed to operate these hotels. In a best-case scenario, we estimate that if all current tourists were spread evenly amongst the hotel industry, we could only muster and occupancy in the mid to high 30s percentile. Doubling this arrival number would give our industry a fighting chance to achieve a healthy occupancy. We feel that China is the market that could bring these numbers back to the CNMI in short order," said HANMI.

HANMI stated that at the rate hotels in the CNMI are operating right now, it will prove unsustainable unless the China market returns.

"Unlike provisions of ARPA that provided direct resources to the CNMI government to offset the substantial loss of revenue during the pandemic, our industry has sustained operations over two or more years of consistent losses without a similar access to direct funding. This is unsustainable, and it will become increasingly difficult for our hotel general managers to lobby their owners to keep the doors open. This is further exacerbated by no clear replacement of the China market. In this situation, funds are extremely tight, and improvements in our products take a back seat to keeping the lights on," said HANMI.

In closing, HANMI reiterated its support for the exemption of the CNMI from Order 213 which limits the number of flights entering the U.S and its territories.

"Placing China to CNMI flights in the same route authority number as the China to USA limitation will certainly place the CNMI at the last priority for approval. We request that you lobby the U.S. Department of Transportation to remove the CNMI from this limitation and grant the China to CNMI flights separately from this limitation and approval process.

## IPI

*From page 3*

trict Court entered judgment in favor of Gray against IPI in the amount of $5,686,182.20 plus pre-judgment interest, post-judgment interest, and attorneys' fees and costs.

On July 3, 2023, since IPI did not pay the judgment or post a bond, Gray applied for a writ of execution against certain assets belonging to IPI.

IPI did not file a timely opposition to that application.

On Aug. 16, 2023, the court issued a writ of execution in favor of Gray and the clerk issued a notice about the writ and informing IPI of its rights.

On Aug. 21, 2023, the U.S. Marshals Service filed a notice affirming that the writ was executed.

NMC, DCCA-CCDF PARTNERSHIP

# First cohort completes Early Childhood Education Program

Northern Marianas College, in partnership with the CNMI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs-Childcare Development Fund, recently expanded the CNMI's child care development workforce through an 18-month long certification program in early childhood education.

Clarinda Aldan, Elizabeth Castro, Levi Sobremisana, Raquel Tadifa, and Rosana Villaraiz were the graduates of the first cohort of the College's certification program.

The CCDF Early Childhood Education Certification Program was created based on an agreement between the DCCA-CCDF and NMC's School of Education and Community Development Institute. This program enabled childcare providers to enhance their skills and become more proficient in their roles by gaining valuable insights into early childhood education.

"Through our partnership with DCCA-CCDF, Northern Marianas College is proud to have empowered dedicated individuals like Clarinda, Elizabeth, Levi, Raquel, and Rosana." NMC President Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD, said. "We have no doubt that they will continue to further nurture the minds of the CNMI's youth."

Maribel Loste, the administrator of DCCA-CCDF, said that she is looking forward to more partnerships with the college to further enhance the CNMI's education workforce.

"We are grateful of the partnership we have with NMC, and we extend our kudos to the five who recently completed the program," Loste said.

Loste added that there are 15 members for the next cohort with the college.

"I encourage more of our child care providers to enroll in programs such as the certification courses that are offered at the College, and to always look for opportunities for professional development," Loste said.

Raquel Tadifa, a graduate of the program, said that the certification course enhanced her knowledge in child development.

"What we have learned is very applicable when working with children in the CNMI, and it's a great opportunity to further expand our knowledge," Tadifa said.

Levi Sobremisana, another graduate, expressed his appreciation for making this course a reality.

"I would like to thank NMC, its Community Development Institute, the NMC School of Education, and DCCA-CCDF for this invaluable program," Sobremisana said. "The teachers and the program are very understanding of our schedules as we are full-time working students, and it is really uplifting for us as they are accommodating and are always supportive of us."

"I believe this course will help all child care providers. I have learned a lot and the techniques and strategies are very helpful as we learn more to help a child develop as well to help a child reach its goals," Sobremisana added.

For more information about the College's child development certification courses, contact the NMC's Community Development institute at (670) 237-6810 or email cdi@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

NMC

In photo from the left, NMC CDI Program manager Geraldine Sasamoto, NMC SOE assistant professor for Elementary Education Resida Keller, NMC SOE instructor Randy Yates, EdD, NMC SOE instructor Sara Forti, DCCA-CCDF administrator Maribel Loste, NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, NMC SOE director Roland Merar, NMC dean of Student Support Services Charlotte Cepeda, NMC CDI director Monique Boyer Saban, and NMC CDI administrative assistant Pamela Ada. Seated from the left, Elizabeth Castro, Levi Sobremisana, Rosana Villaraiz, and Raquel Tadifa. Not in the photo is graduate Clarinda Aldan.

## EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

### 4.6-magnitude earthquake occurs north of Saipan

At 10:41am on Sept. 10, 2023, a report of a 4.6-magnitude earthquake occurred north of Saipan. Currently, there are no reports of injuries or damages and no Tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### 5.2-magnitude earthquake occurs near Maug Islands

At 8:54pm on Sept. 8, 2023, a report of a 5.2-magnitude earthquake occurred near the Maug Islands Region, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no reports of injuries or damages and no Tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Guam P.O.S.T meeting on Sept. 15

The Guam P.O.S.T. (Peace Officer Standards & Training) Commission will hold a meeting on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023, 10:30am at the Guam Community College in Room 112, Learning Resource Center (GCC Library), Building 4000.

It is highly encouraged for all attendees to wear a mask on GCC campus.

Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services should contact (671)735-5641 Ext. 5594/5597. ***(PR)***

### FOA to hold auditions

The Friends of the Arts, Saipan's community theater, is holding auditions for the first productions in its youth theater program.

In late October, FOA will produce an extended one act production, and a short one act production performed and produced by middle school and high school students.

The audition and informational meeting date is Sept. 9 from 3pm to 5 pm and 1:30pm to 3pm Sept. 10, both at Marianas High School Room 102D.

FOA is also looking for adults who may wish to participate. ***(PR)***

### JKPL parking lot closed Oct. 27, 28, 30, 31

In order to prepare for the Annual Community Trunk-o-Treat event, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's parking lot will be closed Oct. 27, 28, 30, and 31.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services LS-LS-252496-OLS-22 and LS-253665-OLS-23.

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library is an equal opportunity provider and employer. ***(PR)***

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In the Matter of the Petition to Correct Marriage License of: | ] | FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0133 |
| PRISCO ONGRUNG, Petitioner(s). | ] | ORDER AFTER HEARING |

This matter came before the Court on a Petition to Correct Application for Marriage License and Record of Marriage on September 6, 2023 at 1:30 p.m., in Courtroom 217A, at the Superior Court, Guma' Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. Prisco Ongrung ("Petitioner") appeared pro se.

Based on the matters adduced, Petitioner did not meet posting and publishing requirements. The Court continued this matter, and hereby orders Petitioner to publish notice of the next hearing at least once before the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the CNMI, as well as post the same in the Superior Court bulletin for a period of ten (10) days before the hearing.

This matter is continued to **September 19, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217**. Petitioner is ordered to appear.

**SO ORDERED** on the date set forth above in the year 2023.

/s/ _____
**TERESA KIM-TENORIO,** Associate Judge

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES**
**CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID**
**ITB NO.: ITB23-DCCA-42300104**

SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (HPO) BUILDING RENOVATION REHABILITATION PROJECT"**

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**QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS BY SEPTEMBER 18, 2023, TO MR. FRANCISCO M. RABAULIMAN VIA EMAIL AT frank.rabauliman@gov.mp

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ FRANCISCO M. RABAULIMAN**
**ACTING SECRETARY, DCCA**

**/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.**
**ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 23-01**
**United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands**

**Court Services Coordinator**

Permanent, Full-Time Position - Location: SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
Starting grade: CL-24 step 1 to CL-26 Step 25, $46,435 to $70,603 (which includes 12.25 % COLA)
(Depending on qualifications and experience; promotion potential to CL-26 without further competition.)
(Ultimate pay potential CL 26 $71,192 - $91,787 by progressive performance and career salary progression.)
**Opening Date: September 1, 2023 • Applications received by September 14, 2023 will be given priority.**

**Position Overview:**
The Court Services Coordinator provides administrative support for Magistrate Judge court cases, compiles data and produces various reports, prepares travel cost estimates and payments, acts as Human Resources and staff development coordinator, researches and coordinates public outreach programs and conferences. Obtain the complete position description at https://www.nmid.uscourts.gov/employment This position includes full federal employment benefits, with paid leave, federal holidays, health insurance, life insurance, and federal retirement benefits.

**Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications:**
High school graduate or equivalent with at least one year general work experience plus one year of specialized work experience in finance, human resources, public relations, information technology, graphic arts, or court and legal administration. Education above the high school level may be substituted for one year of general work experience. Additional preference will be given for college degree. Applicants should demonstrate sound ethics and judgment, be able to communicate effectively (orally and in writing), and be skilled in word processing, spreadsheets, and be trainable in using automated systems.

**Citizenship Requirement:**
Applicants are required to be U.S. citizens or aliens who are authorized to work in the United States.

**Notice to Applicants:**
Excepted service appointments are "at will" and may be terminated by either the court or the employee at any time for any reason. Selectees may be subject to a background check or investigation and suitability determination; and may be subject to an updated background investigation every five years. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Conduct. Direct bank deposit of pay is required.

**Application Procedure:**
Cover Letter, Resume, and AO-78 application form are *required*. (Questions 18, 19, and 20 on page 5 of the AO-78 need not be answered.) AO-78 forms are at:
https://www.uscourts.gov/forms/human-resources-forms/application-judicial-branch-federal-employment
or may be picked up at the U.S. District Court. Please compile your Cover Letter, Resume, and your *signed* AO-78 application into one combined PDF document and email to: HR@nmid.uscourts.gov

Position is open until filled; applications received by September 14, 2023 will be given priority.

*The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

# NMC graduate helps community members connect with careers

Serving as the director of the Division of Employment Services at the CNMI Department of Labor as well as an adjunct Sociology professor at Northern Marianas College, NMC graduate Eugene Tebuteb is an inspiring example of many NMC grads who are playing multiple roles in our island community.

Tebuteb graduated from NMC in 2003 with his AA in Liberal Arts. He describes his time at NMC as one that has helped him develop the critical thinking and analytical skills that served to be invaluable to his personal and professional life.

"I also believe that NMC, being in and of itself, an institution predicated on fostering a culture of learning, reasoning and problem-solving, prepares young adults to step into the real and unadulterated world with a particular set of cognitive skills," Tebuteb states. "Those skills have been instrumental to past and present successes."

In his decision to attend NMC, he recalls how NMC's "start smart" advocacy was not as common during his college years.

"Retrospectively, the start smart 'maxim' could not have been truer for me. Essentially,

NMC

Northern Marianas College alumnus Eugene Tebuteb is the director of the Division of Employment Services at the CNMI Department of Labor as well as an adjunct Sociology professor at Northern Marianas College.

I chose NMC because—even if I didn't quite grasp it at the time—it was the smartest way to start my life."

Tebuteb went on to enlist in the Army in 2004. After his military service, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Sociology at Texas A&M University in 2011, and furthermore earned his Master of Science in Sociology at the University of Texas in 2014.

His motivation for pursuing his degree came from personal goals and values combined with the fact that he comes from a family of educators.

"My motivation for pursuing my occupation has a lot to do with my individual disposition to give back to my community every chance I get and 'pay it forward' when the opportunity arises," he noted.

Today, Tebuteb oversees one of six divisions within the CNMI Department of Labor, where he ensures that various operations such as job placement, assistance, and referral services run smoothly and conform to the rules and standards within local labor regulations.

"One of the division's primary services is job placement. This is done systematically through job matching procedures, where we match job seeker skills to employer needs," Tebuteb explains.

"We also coordinate resources for job readiness (e.g., training, internship, education) and also conduct, from time to time, follow-up services to make certain that workers are protected during employment."

Additionally being employed by NMC, he shares, "As an adjunct professor, my primary goal is to assist students with the exploration of sociological concepts, theories and methods to understand human behavior in a systematic and scientific manner."

In advice to current students, Tebuteb advises that they are on the right path just by being there, and to get back up and try not to look back despite failures.

"My college professor once said, 'sometimes, you won't really know what will become of you after you've obtained your degree…interestingly and somehow, your calling always seems to find its way to you,'" he recalls.

Moreover, in advice to those who have achieved their goal of a career or occupation, Tebuteb shares a quote, "Tim McGraw could not have sung it any better: 'Always stay humble and kind.'"

On a final note, Tebuteb states, "It is true that issues will persist within the educational milieu long after my time and yours, but success is and will always be the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out. My faith in our tiny island's educational system will not falter as long as every now and then, NMC produces alumni that are willing, able and motivated to give back to the community they so adore." ***(PR)***

# OIA approves advance of $288.2M to USVI, Guam

**WASHINGTON, D.C.—**The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announces the approval of $212,039,584 to the U.S. Virgin Islands and $76,195,730 to Guam. These payments represent an advance of 2024 estimated rum tax-cover over payments to the USVI and 2024 federal income tax Section 30 advance payments to Guam. Both payments will be made this week.

"The Office of Insular Affairs continues to work closely with the U.S. Department of Treasury to ensure that these critical funds for the governments of both Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are calculated and transmitted as quickly as possible," said Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor.

Under the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands (48 USC Chapter 12 Section 1541), any excise tax collected on USVI-manufactured rum imported into the mainland United States is transferred to or "covered-over" to the USVI. The USVI Government submits an advance estimate of rum excise taxes to OIA on an annual basis so that a payment can be made by September of each fiscal year. Any adjustments are calculated and paid based upon amounts advanced from rum excise taxes derived from the USVI and actual receipts collected by the federal government. The fiscal year 2024 advance payment to the USVI Government was calculated using the $10.50 per proof gallon rate, as provided for under current law.

Under Guam's Organic Act, federal income taxes derived from active members of the United States Armed Forces and pensions paid to retired civilian and military employees of the United States, or their survivors, who reside in, or who are domiciled in Guam, are annually "covered-over" to the Guam Treasury to support the operations, activities, and programs of the local government (48 U.S. Code 1421 Section h). The Guam Government submits an advance estimate of these income taxes to OIA on an annual basis so that a payment can be made by September of each fiscal year. Any adjustments are calculated and paid based upon amounts advanced for income tax collections and actual income taxes collected.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs carry out the Secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the Insular Areas. ***(PR)***

# 3 from Saipan, 1 from Tinian make SNHU Summer 2023 President's List

**MANCHESTER, NH**—It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University congratulates the Kina Sablan, Elicia San Nicolas, and Jourdon Brennan of Saipan and Marvieluz Syed of Tinian on being named to the Summer 2023 President's List. The summer terms run from May to August.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

SNHU is a private, nonprofit institution with a 90-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 170,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the "Most Innovative" regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at www.snhu.edu. ***(PR)***


**CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES**
**CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID**
**ITB NO.: ITB23-PAO-42300101**

**SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**
**TIME: 09:30 A.M.**

**"LEASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 'F' VEHICLE FOR TWO (2) YEARS"**

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**QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARMENT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OFFICE BY SEPTEMBER 19, 2023, TO MR. PATRICK GUERRERO VIA EMAIL AT pguerrero@pa.gov.mp

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

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**/S/ PATRICK C. GUERRERO**
**GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

**/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ**
**ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**



**NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION**
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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
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**PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on August 03, 2023, **Eusebio C. Borja & Margarita C. Borja, parents of Rose B. Fields, a NMHC Housing Specialist, and Michael W. Fields, a CDBG-DR Infrastructure Construction Specialist**, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of individuals who meet the national objective of urgent need and are intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and are applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Mr. & Mrs. Fields are not and shall not be involved in the handling of this loan application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.:(670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before **Friday, September 29, 2023**.

Dated this 12th day of September, 2023.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

# US given OK to enforce maritime law around Palau

**BANGKOK, Thailand** (AP)—The United States has signed a new agreement with Palau, which gives American ships the authorization to unilaterally enforce maritime regulations in the tiny Pacific island nation's exclusive economic zone, the U.S. Coast Guard said Tuesday.

The agreement comes as both the U.S. and China are seeking to expand their influence in the Pacific, and follows pleas from Palau's president for Washington's help to deter Beijing's "unwanted activities" in its coastal waters.

In the agreement, concluded a week ago, U.S. Coast Guard ships can enforce regulations inside Palau's exclusive economic zone on behalf of the nation without a Palauan officer present, the Coast Guard said in a statement.

AP

A Philippine supply boat, center, maneuvers around Chinese coast guard ships as they tried to block its way near Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, at the disputed South China Sea on Aug. 22, 2023.

"This agreement helps Palau monitor our exclusive economic zone, protect against Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and deter uninvited vessels from conducting questionable maneuvers within our waters," Palau's president, Surangel S. Whipps Jr., was quoted as saying in the release.

"It's these types of partnerships that help us work toward our common goal of peace and prosperity in the region."

The statement made no mention of China, but in June, Whipps told reporters in Tokyo that three Chinese boats had made "uninvited" entries into his country's waters since he took office in 2021, and stressed at the time the need for further U.S. backing to enhance deterrence against China's assertive moves in the region.

"The United States is responsible for our security and we would also inform them that we need them to engage and help us in deterring any unwanted activities," Whipps said.

Tensions have been growing in the Asia-Pacific region as China presses its widespread maritime claims and the U.S. and its allies push back.

At about the same time the agreement with Palau was signed last week, two Philippine boats, with a U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft overhead, breached a Chinese coast guard blockade in the disputed South China Sea to deliver supplies to Filipino forces guarding a contested shoal.

It was the latest flare-up from long-standing territorial disputes in the busy sea that involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei.

In June, Whipps accused China of conducting surveying activities in Palau waters, and suggested his country may be being punished by Beijing over its stance on Taiwan.

Palau is one of the few countries that recognizes Taiwan and maintains diplomatic relations with the island, which split from mainland China during a civil war in 1949 and set up a rival government to the victorious Communists in Beijing.

Elsewhere in the Pacific, the government of the Solomon Islands was persuaded to switch its diplomatic recognition of Taiwan to China in 2019. Since then, the Solomons signed a secretive security pact with China that has given rise to concerns it could give Beijing a military foothold in the South Pacific.

The U.S. has countered with diplomatic moves of its own, including opening an embassy in the Solomon Islands.

The agreement with Palau is similar to one concluded with the Federated States of Micronesia at the end of 2022, following which the U.S. Coast Guard has conducted boardings for the Pacific nation.

The U.S. also signed a bilateral defense agreement in May with Papua New Guinea, which will allow the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct boardings alongside its local counterparts in Papua New Guinea's exclusive economic zone for the first time later this year.

The U.S. Coast Guard said the agreements show "the United States' ongoing investment in protecting shared resources and an interest in maritime safety and security."

"This unity of effort with Pacific island countries, including the collaboration with Palau, amplifies our collective ability to protect resources and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific for all nations who observe the rule of law," the Coast Guard said.

# First Stablecoin pilot distribution phase ends

**PALAU**—The nation's first ever Palau Stablecoin pilot is moving to its data collection phase as the distribution phase closes.

Participants of the nation's first ever Palau Stablecoin pilot are being asked to fill out a survey that will be sent out next week as the first phase of the process comes to a close.

According to a letter from the Digital Residency Office & FinTech/Cybersecurity/AML/CFT Compliance, under the Ministry of Finance, the distribution of Palau Stablecoin ends Friday, Sept. 8, 2023. Those with PSC have until Sept. 15, 2023, to spend it.

"First, thank you all for being part of Palau's first Stablecoin Pilot. Whether you completed the process or ultimately decided to withdraw from the project, we are very thankful for your willingness to explore the possibilities of Palau's fintech future with us," states a letter to pilot participants from Jay Anson, Director of the Digital Residency Office & FinTech, Cybersecurity, AML/CFT Compliance.

The distribution phase started in July. The nearly 200 participants were able to use the Palau Stablecoin, which is a tokenized USD with each PSC equaling $1. There were three participating vendors in this pilot: King's, Penthouse, and Surangel & Sons.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Landis Recheluul gives a thumbs up after his Nautilus Wallet for the Palau Stablecoin is set up.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Steven Redhor, one of about 200 volunteers in Palau's first ever Palau Stablecoin pilot, uses his digital wallet to make a purchase at the King's Minute Mart in Koror, Palau.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lolyna Ngiratrang, who is with the Digital Residency Office & FinTech, Cybersecurity, AML/CFT Compliance, works with Ripple Team members Elbachir Belbachir Senior Project Manager-CBDC/Ripple, and Brett Mollin, Ripple Senior Engineer as they start distribution of the Palau Stablecoin on July 3, 2023.

Next steps include working with retailers on redemptions before the pilot's official termination at the end of the month.

"Next week we will send a survey to everyone who participated in the pilot. Please complete the survey as soon as possible. Your feedback is critical to developing our final report to the Olbiil Era Kelulau and the President," Anson wrote in a letter to participants.

"If we are authorized to move forward with the next phase of the Stablecoin program, our collective lessons learned will shape the way ahead." ***(PR)***

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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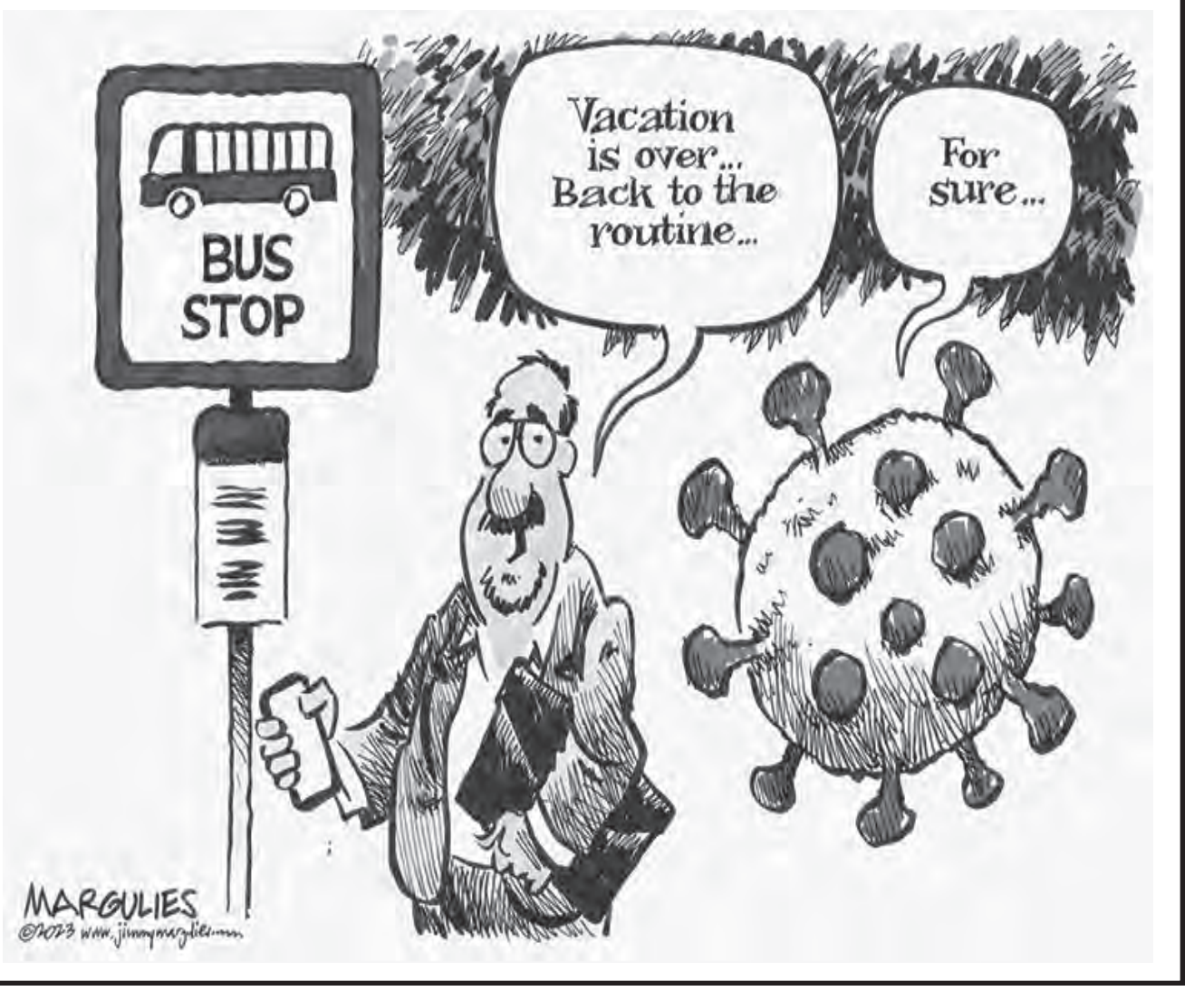


## EDITORIAL

# Group identity drives American division

Social scientists believe they know why America has become so divided along political lines. "The human brain in many circumstances is more suited to tribalism and conflict than to civility and reasoned debate," The Wall Street Journal reported last month in a piece headlined "Why Tribalism Took Over Our Politics."

Modern communication tools are especially able to exploit this finding, providing users with what they want to hear rather than challenging assumptions. "Decades of social science research show that our need for collective belonging is forceful enough to reshape how we view facts and affect our voting decisions," the essay asserts. "When our group is threatened, we rise to its defense."

The Journal cites Donald Trump as a reliable practitioner of exploiting group identity, although it allows that Democrats also use the tactic, but "not as forcefully."

It's true that the former president's ardent supporters see themselves in similar terms as outsiders scorned by the elites. But the idea that Democrats only reluctantly appeal to this base instinct is laughable. The Democratic Party virtually invented the toxic notion of identity politics and has built entire coalitions on the idea that individuals are defined, not by their words or deeds, but by their skin color, sexual preference or any number of other characteristics.

In a memoir published shortly before his death in 2011, Christopher Hitchens tore into the concept, which he dated to the late 1960s. "It would never have done for any of us to stand up and say that our sex or sexuality or pigmentation or disability were qualifications in themselves," he wrote. "There are many ways of dating the moment when the left lost or—I would prefer to say — discarded its moral advantage, but this was the first time that I was to see the sellout conducted so cheaply."

Yet this is the modus operandi of the modern Democratic Party, which has become openly hostile to concepts such as personal responsibility and individual liberty while promoting group identity and grievance. If Trump has become especially adept at practicing the politics of tribalism, he has had years to watch how its done.

This obsession with identity politics has indeed led to more division and becomes self-perpetuating. "Americans in the past were more likely to meet people different than themselves," the Journal reported, "which created opportunities for reducing group bias and creating conditions for compromise."

But how do we turn back from this poisonous path? A Stanford study found that the "strategies that worked best at reducing partisan animosity essentially modeled good behavior, highlighting what Democrats and Republicans have in common as Americans or presenting people making a good-faith effort to understand someone with differing views."

But that will require elected officials on both sides of the aisle to set an example of leadership—something too many modern politicians have proven utterly incapable of doing in recent decades. That leaves it up to American voters who are sick of extremists driving the agenda.

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# Why the unemployment rate is much higher than it seems

**By E.J. ANTONI**
The Heritage Foundation

*E.J. Antoni is a public finance economist at The Heritage Foundation and a senior fellow at Committee to Unleash Prosperity.*

The labor market is nowhere near as strong as it appears. If that sounds surprising, it's because the Biden administration is playing a shell game with unemployment numbers.

With millions of Americans missing from the workforce, the unemployment rate is being artificially depressed. Accounting for this sleight of hand reveals an unemployment rate of over 6%, not the official 3.8%.

To make sense of the numbers, we need to understand what led to today's labor market conditions. The two-month-long recession in 2020 wasn't a normal downturn caused by bad investment, misallocation of capital and/or overextension of credit. It was an artificial recession caused by the government forcibly shutting down a robust economy, ending a period of both fast growth and low inflation.

Tens of millions of people became unemployed in a span of two weeks. But when those artificial constraints were lifted, the labor market came back at the fastest rate ever and was quickly approaching its pre-pandemic trend. This is the opposite of a normal recession, where the labor market slowly accelerates into a recovery.

President Joe Biden inherited an economy that was growing at a $1.5 trillion annualized rate and was adding an average of 1.4 million jobs per month after the government-imposed shutdowns. At the same time, inflation was only 1.4%, which is even below the Federal Reserve's 2% target. But Biden's anti-growth, big-government agenda slammed the brakes on the economy and the labor market.

After just 18 months of the Biden administration, inflation soared to 40-year highs, and the economy contracted for two consecutive quarters. Average monthly job growth has slowed 70%, and America remains 4.6 million jobs below its pre-pandemic trend.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' survey of households contains even worse data, showing the number of Americans employed remains 5.5 million below its pre-pandemic trend. The survey also shows a depressed labor force participation rate and a shocking increase in the number of people not in the labor force, relative to February 2020.

Before the government-imposed lockdowns, the number of people not in the labor force was about 95 million and was falling. Since June 2020, however, the level has been stuck around 100 million. That means millions of Americans left the labor market still haven't come back, which explains why the ratio of employment to the population also shows a gap of 4.5 million people relative to its trend.

These millions of missing workers are important to remember because their absence skews many of the statistics used to gauge the health of the labor market. Imagine a labor force of 100 people wherein 10 are unemployed, giving an unemployment rate of 10%. If one of those unemployed people leaves the labor force, the unemployment rate drops to 9.1% (9 divided by 99).

No jobs were created in that example, but the unemployment rate went down. That's exactly what's been happening in the real economy. Accounting for the millions of people currently excluded from the labor market reveals an unemployment rate between 6.3% and 6.8%, much higher than the official 3.8% rate.

To further illustrate the point, over 700,000 people rejoined the labor force last month, in part because families are having trouble making ends meet. Less than a third of them were able to find work, and even fewer found full-time jobs. Yet despite the increase in employment, the unemployment rate rose because so many more people are finally being included in the official number of unemployed.

Yet there are even more indicators showing weakness in the labor market. The number of job openings has plummeted to below its pre-pandemic trend, indicating softening labor demand which will put downward pressure on wage growth. At the same time, businesses are cutting hours and reducing the number of full-time employees.

As inflation continues to eat into family budgets and more households need a second income, additional people are reentering the labor market, all while businesses are hiring less. That will drive the official unemployment rate much higher and expose this shell game for what it is.

**EDITORIAL POLICY**

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# History shows the path between 'woke' economics and nationalism on stilts

**By BRUCE YANDLE**
Tribune News Service

*Bruce Yandle is a distinguished adjunct fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, dean emeritus of the Clemson University College of Business & Behavioral Science, and a former executive director of the Federal Trade Commission.*

The U.S. economy and economies worldwide are out of balance and still adjusting to the effects of COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, higher energy prices, persistent inflation and the rapid rise of high-tech global firms. As a result, Germany's longstanding manufacturing boom has ended, China's economic growth is headed south and America is registering just pale GDP growth assisted by COVID stimulus spending and large government subsidies designed to make the nation less dependent on fossil fuels and imports from other countries (especially China).

With lots of shaking going on, a presidential campaign is gearing up. President Joe Biden, hoping for four more years, is determined to use the powers of government to redistribute income to his party's favored interest groups and address what his administration sees as fundamental social problems involving equity, equal opportunity and environmental decay. "Woke" is one of those terms whose definition sometimes depends upon the person using it, but we can apply it to much of his bundle of issues.

Biden's first three years in office, with political successes and setbacks, have demonstrated this commitment. His administration struggled to cancel student loans, found ways to raise construction workers wages by regulation, pushed for a renters bill of rights, and even worked to establish regulations to protect workers from laboring in unusually hot weather. Biden has also added new tariffs to those imposed by the Trump administration and set in motion administrative orders for more domestic manufacturing research and development funded by federal agencies.

The loyal opposition seeking to replace Biden, led in polls by former President Donald Trump, appears just as dedicated to avoiding the woke movement entirely.

Some proud to be called nationalists and with shouts of "America First," they call for closing America's borders tighter to limit the arrival of customer-friendly goods, services and labor from others parts of the world. Candidate Trump, once again talking like a gatekeeper president, suggests 10% tariffs imposed on all goods and services crossing a U.S. border, this in addition to what's already on the books. They also seek more traditional Republican reforms like cuts in federal programs and regulation.

In fact, what we may have in the offing is nationalism on stilts. But whether woke or nationalism, the beneficial forces of Adam Smith's invisible hand can be compromised by government interference in markets, which means sacrificing U.S. economic prosperity A most recent Tax Foundation study of costs imposed on the U.S. economy indicates "Trump-Biden tariffs will reduce long-run GDP by 0.21%, wages by 0.14%, and employment by 166,000 full-time equivalent jobs."

Looking ahead, is there a path between the two major political forces affecting the U.S. political economy? Or will the nation succumb to one or the other? Which will it be?

A hint of an answer may be found in an earlier period in the nation's history: the 1912 presidential election. Democrat Woodrow Wilson, then New Jersey's governor, was running against former Republican president turned third-party candidate Theodore Roosevelt. This was a time, like now, when new industries were expanding rapidly and the nation's economy was experiencing growing pains. In familiar ways, there was concern about revamping the nation's antitrust laws to keep big business in check, how to respond to growing economic competition from abroad, and how to deal with the burgeoning banking industry that operated without meaningful federal coordination. (The federal reserve system was started in December 1913.)

In the face of all this, Roosevelt called for a "New Nationalism," higher tariffs and regulating large industrial firms as though they were public utilities. In contrast, Wilson unveiled his "New Freedom," which emphasized lower tariffs, income taxes to replace lost tariff revenue, a new federal central bank, amending antitrust laws, and a federal interstate trade commission, which in 1914 became the Federal Trade Commission.

Wilson argued that American enterprise should be unleashed, but not unregulated. He sought stout guardrails to bring greater consumer protection while, through intense competition in open world markets, forcing U.S. businesses to be more innovative and productive. Wilson won and successfully pushed much of his agenda through Congress. In a time of turmoil, New Freedom trumped New Nationalism.

What about 2024? Is it possible for us again to escape the extremes that might accompany more nationalism or more wokeism? The past offers some hope. Maybe, once again, someone with emerge with a call for a New Freedom and increased reliance on free-market capitalism.

# Gen Z is dropping the college dream. It's time for America to catch up

**By EMMA VARVALOUCAS**
Chicago Tribune

*Emma Varvaloucas is executive director of The Progress Network, where she tracks emerging, positive societal trends in the "What Could Go Right?" podcast and newsletter.*

For years, we have lamented the spike in college costs and accompanying student debt bloat while we teach high schoolers to covet admittance to a tiny sliver of prestigious universities — ones that refuse to enlarge incoming class sizes despite endowments the size of some small countries' gross domestic product.

President Joe Biden's first plan to relieve student debt is dead in the water, and the second is off to a slow start. Meanwhile, Americans' confidence in higher education is eroding, and college graduates are surprised to find themselves still in the working class.

Colleges are finally lying in the beds they made for themselves. According to data from the National Student Clearinghouse, undergraduate enrollment dropped 8% from 2019 to 2022 and doesn't show signs of recovering post-pandemic. "The slide in the college-going rate since 2018 is the steepest on record," The Associated Press reported this spring, going on to paint those numbers as a crisis for Gen Z.

But is it really?

In an ideal world, the United States would have enough college graduates to fill job openings in sectors where higher education is necessary, and well-paying jobs would be available for those uninterested in a degree. Current conditions aren't all pointing in that direction. But Americans' new disinterest in college, as counterintuitive as it may seem, is among the ones that do.

To start, the U.S. economy right now is far friendlier toward low-wage workers than it has been in years.

The combination of pandemic-era stimulus checks and 10 years-plus of a downward-moving unemployment rate has created a tight labor market in which companies are being forced to compete for workers and, in reaction, are raising starting wages and offering more benefits. Target, for instance, raised its starting hourly wage last year to $15 and as high as $24 for some jobs and announced that workers clocking at least 25 hours per week would be eligible for health coverage.

It's no surprise that Gen Z has already cottoned on that the "math isn't mathing" for going to college anymore. Why bother, if you can, as this viral TikTok jokes, make more money as a McDonald's drive-thru employee than as a doctor?

It's not just so-called unskilled work that is a decent option these days, either. I have a friend the same age as I am who didn't go to college. He is a welder and makes the same salary I do—and he has the benefit of not having had to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in debt. He loves history, and I told him off the cuff one time that he could always go back to college if he wanted to, to study history. "Why?" he said. I didn't really have an answer.

I was simply parroting what American teenagers have heard for years. But after a long while of selling college as the ultimate achievement, the U.S. has now overproduced elites in the wrong fields and is in need of technical and trade workers like carpenters and plumbers. Gen Z is paying attention: According to the National Student Clearinghouse, between 2021 and 2022, enrollment in trade programs from repair to construction went up.

Companies flush with money for clean energy projects from the Inflation Reduction Act will also soon come calling for technical workers, which Biden is taking care to highlight in his recent speeches. Long story short, it looks like my friend will always easily find a job, whereas my future in the creator economy/journalism industry/white-collar whatever may be more precarious than I would like to admit. (Just ask ChatGPT.)

Kicked off by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan last year, states from Pennsylvania to Utah are dropping degree requirements for state jobs. They, along with companies such as IBM and Merck, are part of an "emerging degree reset" that focuses more on skills than on a degree when hiring, a movement that has caught the attention of former President Barack Obama.

Options are growing for Gen Z and others to acquire those skills, too. Instead of a bachelor's degree, job-seekers can complete, for instance, Google's Career Certificates, online training for skills like UX design and data analytics. Entrepreneur Scott Galloway's Section 4 runs business strategy "sprints" meant to make a business school education more accessible, and organizations such as Opportunity@Work are connecting applicants "skilled through alternative routes," such as the military or on-the-job learning, with employers.

Even colleges are reading the writing on the wall. Experts are expecting them to significantly lower their costs for 2024. Already, writes Jon Marcus for The Hechinger Report, the "pace of annual increases in tuition and fees—which for years rose three times faster than the cost of everything else—has for the first time since the early 1980s slowed to a rate that's well below inflation."

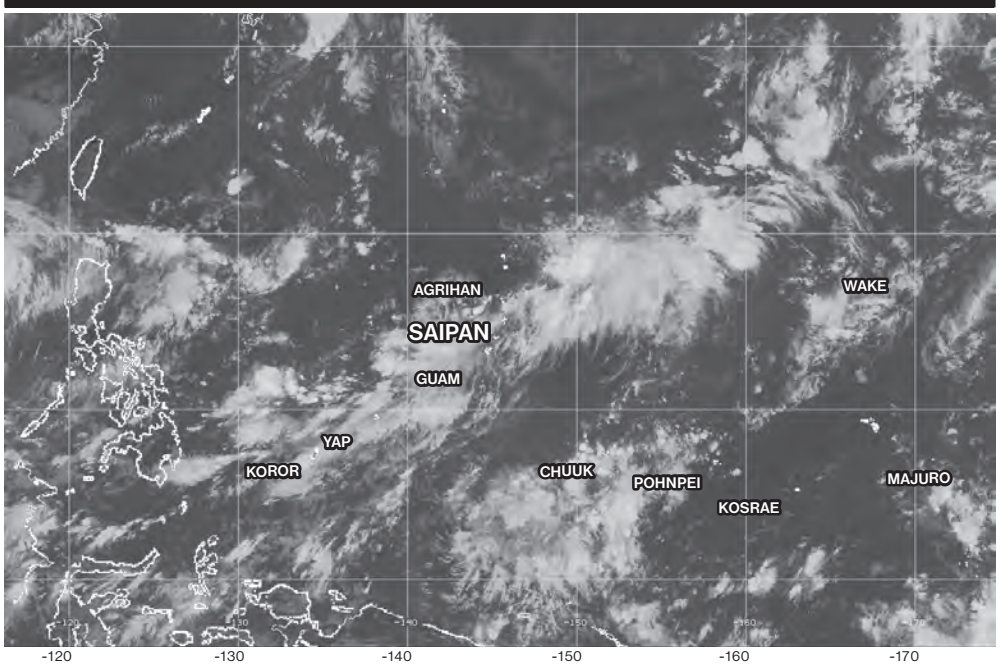
It's clear Gen Z is dropping the college dream. It's time America caught up and supported the notion that going to college isn't the only route to financial success and the only one that deserves society's accolades. Rather than panic at the "crisis," we can look at the new choices Gen Z is making and say that we may be getting what we said we wanted.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny | A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny | Mostly sunny | Mostly sunny | A chance of showers. Partly sunny |
| 86° 79° | 86° 79° | 87° 79° | 89° 79° | 88° 79° |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 8:02 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show scattered showers moving through the Marianas Waters this morning, mainly west of the islands. The Ipan buoy reveals east swell around 2 feet with south swell around 2 feet and south wind waves on top. This leads to combined seas of 4 to 6 feet, considering the south swell is likely actually a southwest swell at least a foot higher.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/*

| MICRONESIA | ▲ ▼ °F | |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorm | 84° / 79° |
| Palau | Thunderstorm | 83° / 76° |
| Yap | Thunderstorm | 85° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorm | 86° / 80° |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorm | 87° / 76° |
| Kosrae | Partly Cloudy | 87° / 76° |
| Majuro | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 80° |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | ▲ ▼ °F | |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Showers | 61° / 48° |
| Beijing | Partly Cloudy | 82° / 63° |
| Hong Kong | Thunderstorm | 88° / 79° |
| Honolulu | Mostly Sunny | 88° / 77° |
| London | Mostly Cloudy | 72° / 61° |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy | 86° / 67° |
| Manila | Thunderstorm | 86° / 79° |
| Melbourne | Windy | 72° / 52° |
| Miami | Partly Cloudy | 88° / 78° |
| New York | Showers | 75° / 72° |
| Osaka | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 72° |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 77° / 57° |
| Busan | Windy | 77° / 70° |
| Rome | Partly Cloudy | 84° / 63° |
| Salem | Thunderstorm | 88° / 70° |
| San Francisco | Sunny | 67° / 54° |
| Seoul | Partly Cloudy | 81° / 63° |
| Tokyo | Mostly Cloudy | 79° / 68° |
| Washington, DC | Thunderstorm | 82° / 72° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:05 AM | 6:21 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:05 AM | 6:20 PM |
| Thursday | 6:05 AM | 6:19 PM |
| Friday | 6:05 AM | 6:19 PM |
| Saturday | 6:05 AM | 6:18 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | 3:35 AM | 4:46 PM | - |
| Wednesday | 4:25 AM | 5:23 PM | - |
| Thursday | 5:13 AM | 5:58 PM | - |
| Friday | 6:00 AM | 6:32 PM | - |
| Saturday | 6:46 AM | 7:05 PM | - |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | FEET | |
|---|---|---|
| 12:27 AM | Low Tide | 1.14 |
| 05:15 AM | High Tide | 1.66 |
| 12:24 PM | Low Tide | 0.12 |
| 7:20 PM | High Tide | 1.78 |

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 9:50AM | 10:30AM | Daily |
| UA156 | 7:10PM | 7:55PM | 1 up to Sep 4 |

**SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA824 | 7:25AM | 9:55AM | 1, 3, 5 |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PR 111 | 5:55AM | 7:55AM | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| PR 111 | 7:05AM | 9:05AM | 7 |
| UA193 | 6:55PM | 10:55PM | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA183 | 7:15PM | 9:10PM | Daily up to Sep 4 |
| UA183 | 7:20PM | 9:10PM | Daily from Sep 5 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ626/703 | 4:20AM | 10:35PM | 1, 4, 5, 7 |
| 7C3403/2305 | 4:45AM | 10:20PM | Daily |
| UA117/183 | 9:50AM | 9:10PM | Daily via Guam |
| UA117/193 | 9:50AM | 10:55PM | 2, 5 via Guam, Palau |

**SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TW308 | 3:15AM | 7:00AM | Daily |
| OZ626 | 4:20AM | 7:55AM | 1, 4, 5, 7 |
| 7C3403 | 4:45AM | 8:35AM | Daily |
| 7C3405 | 4:10PM | 7:45PM | Daily |

**SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3451 | 3:20AM | 6:30AM | 1, 4, 5, 7 |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 8:00AM | 8:50AM | Daily |
| UA112 | 5:15PM | 6:05PM | 1 up to Sep 4 |

**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA825 | 9:25PM | 1:50AM+1 | 2, 4, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 10:25PM | 4:25AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| UA192 | 10:25PM | 6:10AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau |
| PR110 | 10:30PM | 4:25AM+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 |
| PR110 | 11:40PM | 5:35AM+1 | 6 |
| UA184 | 11:50PM | 5:50AM+1 | 2, 5 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ702/625 | 12:05PM | 2:55AM+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| UA184/174 | 10:25PM | 8:50AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam |
| UA192/174 | 10:25PM | 8:50AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau, Guam |
| 7C2306/3406 | 11:10PM | 3:10PM+1 | Daily |
| UA184/174 | 11:50PM | 8:50AM+1 | 2, 5 via Guam |

**INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3406 | 9:30AM | 3:10PM | Daily |
| TW307 | 8:30PM | 2:15AM+1 | Daily |
| OZ625 | 9:25PM | 2:55AM+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| 7C3404 | 10:10PM | 3:40AM+1 | Daily |

**BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7C3452 | 9:35PM | 2:20AM+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30 | 9:00 | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:00 | 11:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |
| 1302 | 12:00 | 12:30 | Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun |
| 1303 | 15:30 | 16:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| LIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:00 | 12:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30 | 10:00 | Daily |
| 3102 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun |
| 3102 | 14:00 | 14:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |
| 3103 | 16:30 | 17:00 | Daily |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |

# Business

## India forges compromise among divided world powers at G20 summit

**NEW DELHI** (AP)—India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi touted his country as well-placed to bridge gaps in the Group of 20 top economies and solve global problems, but many were skeptical ahead of the weekend's summit given grave divisions within the bloc over the Russia's war in Ukraine.

He was able to dispel those doubts, announcing a unanimous final agreement a day before the G20 summit ended Sunday that included language on the European war which both Russia and China signed off on.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the group agreed to a "very strong" message. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called it a "success of Indian diplomacy," adding "many did not think that would be possible beforehand." And India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, said the declaration "responds to the situation as it stands today."

The statement had softer wording than last year's G20 communique and failed to directly denounce Moscow. Instead, it cited a United Nations charter, saying "all states must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state."

AP

From left, Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, U.S. President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pay their tributes at the Rajghat, a Mahatma Gandhi memorial, in New Delhi, India, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023.

But all countries agreed on the declaration, allowing India to claim diplomatic success.

"This is the first declaration without a single footnote or a chair's summary," said Amitabh Kant, India's top G20 negotiator.

Some experts saw the agreement as a win for Russia, while others read it as an achievement for the West. But most concurred it was a foreign policy triumph for Modi as he pushes to increase India's influence on the world stage.

"India's statement embodies the voice of the emerging Global South" said Derek Grossman, an analyst focused on the Indo-Pacific at the RAND Corporation. "That is a coup for New Delhi, especially within the context of strategic competition against Beijing, helping it to become the leader of this bloc."

At the summit Modi also announced the group had agreed to add the African Union as a permanent member and made progress on other key issues important to the developing nations of the Global South.

"We are seeing the G20 finally come into its own as a truly global entity, and emerging from the shadow of the G7," said Michael Kugelman, director of the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute, referring to the Group of Seven major industrial nations.

"It's emerging as a successful case study of Western and non-Western powers and the Global South working together to pursue shared goals," he said.

The summit came at a time when Russia and China have been trying to put more emphasis on the more like-minded BRICS group—made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—which agreed at its summit last month to expand with six new members. Russian President Vladimir Putin and China's leader Xi Jinping skipped the G20 summit this year.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who took Putin's place at the summit, told reporters the "G20 is going through a crisis" and likened India's "absolute success" to an "internal reform."

"This was manifested in the significant activation of members of the Group of 20 from the Global South with the leading role of India, who, very clearly and persistently, sought to take into account their interests," Lavrov said.

Beijing has been seeking to rally the Global South around a China-centric bloc, and Xi's absence from the meetings meant that Modi and others were able to "promote their own ideas and goals," said Michael Schuman, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub.

With his diplomatic approach, Modi emerged as "probably the summit's big winner," and someone who is becoming an increasingly important player in international affairs, he said.

"Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi showed that he is a force in the developing world as well and has a different vision of the relationship between the developed and developing worlds that is not as confrontational," Schuman said.

A senior European Union official who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to speak candidly about the talks said it was important not to have ended the summit for the first time

## Thailand's LGBTQ+ community draws tourists from China looking to be themselves

**BANGKOK** (AP)—Xinyu Wen traveled to Thailand in June, planning a two-week vacation around Bangkok's Pride parade.

Instead, the 28-year-old stayed a month and a half, as her experience at the parade gave rise to discussions and discoveries in the Thai capital's thriving LBGTQ+ community.

LGBTQ+ people from China, frequently scorned and ostracized at home, are coming to Thailand in droves, drawn by the freedom to be themselves. When Wen walked along the parade on the streets in Bangkok, "I felt like I was in a big party or a huge amusement park. We could forget all upsetting things and feel fun-filled," she said.

Bangkok is only a 5-hour flight from Beijing, and Thailand's tourism authorities actively promote its status as among the most open to LGBTQ+ people in the region.

Wen got interested in Thailand when her friend sent her a photo of rainbow-colored, Pride-themed ice cream being sold on the streets.

"I wanted to go to Thailand to take a look," she said.

Wen describes herself as queer, which she says means that her partners can be any gender and she can be any gender. At home, Wen said she regularly gets judgmental stares on the street for wearing her hair short like a man's, and was once asked by her barber: "What happened to your life?"

But at the Bangkok Pride parade in June, Wen noticed people confidently wore what they wanted. She was excited to be able to express herself publicly and finally drop her guard. More than that, she said she was also impressed by the protest element to the event, in which people carried signs written in traditional Chinese with slogans like "China has no LGBTQ" and "Freedom is what we deserve."

"I felt a mixed feeling, touched but sad," she said.

Ahead of her trip, she read up on the situation in Thailand, finding reports that showed there is still widespread discrimination, especially in the workplace. Thailand does not recognize same-sex unions or marriages, which also means they're barred from adopting children, and other legal processes that straight couples have access to.

Wen arrived at the parade somewhat skeptical. But she ended up finding it empowering.

"Although I initially had a critical attitude toward the parade in Bangkok because discrimination against LGBTQ individuals hasn't disappeared, I still felt inspired because the neglected groups and the suppressed feelings matter here."

Thailand Tourism Authority official Apichai Chatchalermkit said in an Aug. 9 article in The Nation newspaper that LGBTQ+ tourists are considered "high-potential" as they tend to spend more and travel more frequently than other visitors.

"Using a photo of LGBTQ+ individuals in tourism advertisements is considered as offering a warm welcome without discrimination," he said.

Thailand doesn't keep figures on LGBTQ+ tourists. But through mid-August, it has counted 2.2 million Chinese tourists out of an overall 16 million.

Owen Zhu, a gay real estate agent in Bangkok who sells houses to Chinese clients, said many are also coming to stay. He estimated some 2/3 of his clients are LGBTQ+, many of whom buy apartments to live in part- or full-time.

"Among Chinese gay people, Thailand is called gay's heaven," he said, noting that there are many chat groups where gay men from China coordinate trips to Thailand and share information about parties and tickets to events.

Being gay is not illegal in China, though other Asian countries have strict laws around homosexuality—such as Malaysia, which announced in August that anyone in possession of an LGBTQ+-themed watch could be jailed for 3 years. But LGBTQ+ people in China face other pressures to conform that can make the free expression of their identities difficult.

As a lesbian in her conservative province in central China, Jade Yang was talked into marrying a gay man at her parents' request so that both of them could keep up appearances.

The 28-year-old, who works in the television industry, first visited Thailand four years ago and remembers being shocked to hear people talk casually about their same-sex partners. Yang disliked lying to her cousins and friends about the marriage and moved to Thailand in February, saying she wanted to distance herself from her hometown.

Now, she said, she can date the women she likes and focus on her studies and career without worrying about how to act as a straight woman.

## Food recalls are pretty common for things like rocks, insects and plastic

By JONEL ALECCIA
AP HEALTH WRITER

Rocks in Trader Joe's cookies. Insects in its broccoli-cheese soup. Pieces of plastic in Banquet frozen chicken strips.

In recent weeks, U.S. consumers have seen high-profile food recalls for an unappetizing reason: They're contaminated with foreign objects that have no place on a dinner plate. And while no one wants to bite down on stainless steel in peanut butter or bone fragments in smoked sausage, this type of contamination is one of the top reasons for food recalls in the U.S.

Food safety experts and federal agencies use the terms "extraneous" or "foreign" materials to describe things like metal fragments, rubber gaskets and bits of bugs that somehow make it into packaged goods.

"Extraneous materials" triggered nine recalls in 2022 of more than 477,000 pounds of food regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service—triple the number of recalls tied to food contaminated with toxic E. coli bacteria.

And the size of recalls can reach into the millions: In 2019, USDA reported 34 recalls of more than 16 million pounds of food, spurred in large part by a giant recall of nearly 12 million pounds of Tyson chicken strips tainted with pieces of metal.

Plastic pieces from frayed conveyor belts, wood shards from produce pallets, metal shavings or wire from machinery are all common. So are rocks, sticks and bugs that can make it from the field to the factory.

Some contamination may even be expected, the FDA acknowledges in a handbook.

"It is economically impractical to grow, harvest or process raw products that are totally free of non-hazardous, naturally occurring, unavoidable defects," the agency wrote.

Both the USDA and FDA ask companies to promptly notify them when food is potentially contaminated with objects that may harm consumers. The agencies then determine whether recalls are necessary. Most recalls are voluntary and initiated by the companies, though the agencies can request or mandate the action.

Regulators said the Banquet issue was discovered when someone reported an oral injury after eating chicken strips. ConAgra Brands Inc., which owns Banquet, declined to comment beyond the firm's news release. Trader Joe's wouldn't elaborate on how material got into the foods that led to its recent recalls.

Detection of unwanted objects has vastly improved in the past several years, said Keith Belk, director of the Center for Meat Safety and Quality at Colorado State University. Large manufacturers use magnets, metal detectors, X-ray devices and other technology to find unwanted materials in their products.

Still, "they're going to miss things," Belk said.

# Nation

# US marks 22 years since 9/11, from ground zero to Alaska

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Americans are looking back on the horror and legacy of 9/11, gathering Monday at memorials, firehouses, city halls and elsewhere to observe the 22nd anniversary of the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil.

Commemorations stretch from the attack sites—at New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania—to Alaska and beyond. President Joe Biden is due at a ceremony on a military base in Anchorage.

His visit, en route to Washington, D.C., from a trip to India and Vietnam, is a reminder that the impact of 9/11 was felt in every corner of the nation, however remote. The hijacked plane attacks claimed nearly 3,000 lives and reshaped American foreign policy and domestic fears.

On that day, "we were one country, one nation, one people, just like it should be. That was the feeling—that everyone came together and did what we could, where we were at, to try to help," said Eddie Ferguson, the fire-rescue chief in Virginia's Goochland County.

It's more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the Pentagon and more than three times as far from New York. But a sense of connection is enshrined in a local memorial incorporating steel from the World Trade Center's destroyed twin towers.

AP

Hundreds of American flags surround a memorial to the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, behind Eastlake, Ohio, City Hall, Sept. 6, 2002.

The predominantly rural county of 25,000 people holds not just one but two anniversary commemorations: a morning service focused on first responders and an evening ceremony honoring all the victims.

Other communities across the country pay tribute with moments of silence, tolling bells, candlelight vigils and other activities. In Columbus, Indiana, 911 dispatchers broadcast a remembrance message to police, fire and EMS radios throughout the 50,000-person city, which also holds a public memorial ceremony.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts raise and lower the flag at a commemoration in Fenton, Missouri, where a "Heroes Memorial" includes a piece of World Trade Center steel and a plaque honoring 9/11 victim Jessica Leigh Sachs. Some of her relatives live in the St. Louis suburb of 4,000 residents.

"We're just a little bitty community," said Mayor Joe Maurath, but "it's important for us to continue to remember these events. Not just 9/11, but all of the events that make us free."

New Jersey's Monmouth County, which was home to some 9/11 victims, made Sept. 11 a holiday this year for county employees so they could attend commemorations.

As another way of marking the anniversary, many Americans do volunteer work on what Congress has designated both Patriot Day and a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

At ground zero, Vice President Kamala Harris is due to join the ceremony on the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum plaza. The event will not feature remarks from political figures, instead giving the podium to victims' relatives for an hourslong reading of the names of the dead.

James Giaccone signed up to read again this year in memory of his brother, Joseph Giaccone, 43. The family attends the ceremony every year to hear Joseph's name.

"If their name is spoken out loud, they don't disappear," James Giaccone said in a recent interview.

The commemoration is crucial to him.

"I hope I never see the day when they minimize this," he said. "It's a day that changed history."

# McCarthy juggles gov't shutdown, Biden impeachment inquiry

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is a man who stays in motion—enthusiastically greeting tourists at the Capitol, dashing overseas last week to the G7 summit of industrial world leaders, raising funds back home to elect fellow Republicans to the House majority.

But beneath the whirlwind of activity is a stubborn standstill, an imbalance of power between the far-right Republicans who hoisted McCarthy to the speaker's role yet threaten his own ability to lead the House.

It's a political standoff that will be tested anew as the House returns this week from a long summer recess and McCarthy faces a collision course of difficult challenges—seeking to avoid a government shutdown, support Ukraine in the war and launch an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden.

"They've got some really heavy lifting ahead," said the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, John Thune of South Dakota.

McCarthy is going to "have his hands full trying to figure out how to navigate and execute," he said.

Congress has been here before, as has McCarthy in his nearly two decades in office, but the stakes are ever higher, with Republicans powered by an increasingly hard-right faction that is refusing to allow business as usual in Washington.

With former President Donald Trump's backing, McCarthy's right-flank pushed him into the speaker's office at the start of the year only after he agreed to a long list of conservative demands — including the ability to call a quick vote to "vacate the chair" and remove him from office.

That threat of an abrupt ouster hovers over McCarthy's every move, especially now.

To start, Congress faces a deadline to fund the government by the end of the month, or risk a potentially devastating federal shutdown. There's just 11 working days for Congress to act once the House resumes Tuesday.

Facing a backlash from conservatives who want to slash government funding, McCarthy may be able to ease the way by turning to another hard-right priority, launching a Biden impeachment inquiry over the business dealings of the president's son, Hunter Biden.

For McCarthy, running the two tracks—a government funding process alongside an impeachment drive—is an unusual and politically fraught undertaking.

But starting a formal impeachment inquiry into Biden could help to appease Republican allies of Trump, who has emerged as the GOP frontrunner to confront Biden in the 2024 election for the White House.

"He's being squeezed," Brad Woodhouse, a veteran Democratic operative, said of McCarthy. Woodhouse is now a senior adviser to the Congressional Integrity Project, which is preparing to criticize Republicans over the Biden impeachment.

The White House has said Biden is not involved in his son's business dealings.

But Trump's allies among House Republicans are working furiously to unearth any links between Biden and his son's business as they portray Hunter Biden as trading on the family name for financial enrichment and work to erode public support for the president ahead of the presidential election.

Republicans have not yet been able to produce evidence of wrongdoing by President Biden.

White House spokesman Ian Sams said, "Speaker McCarthy shouldn't cave to the extreme, far-right members who are threatening to shut down the government unless they get a baseless, evidence-free impeachment of President Biden. The consequences for the American people are too serious."

Meanwhile, what should have been a fairly prescribed process to fund the government after McCarthy and Biden negotiated a more than $1 trillion deal earlier this summer over the debt limit appears to be falling apart. Even a stopgap measure to simply keep government funding at existing levels for a few months while Congress tries to finish the spending bills is a nonstarter for McCarthy's right flank.

Conservatives powered by the House Freedom Caucus are insisting federal spending is rolled back to 2022 levels and they want to add other priorities to the legislation.

If not, they say they will oppose a temporary measure, called a continuing resolution, or CR, to keep government running.

## ACROSS THE NATION

### Kilauea erupts after nearly two months of quiet

**HONOLULU** (AP)—Kilauea, one of the most active volcanoes in the world, began erupting Sunday after a two-month pause, displaying glowing lava that is a safe distance from people and structures in a national park on the Big Island. The Hawaii Volcano Observatory said the eruption was observed in the afternoon at the summit of Kilauea. The observatory said gases released by the eruption will cause volcanic smog downwind of Kilauea. People living near the park should try to avoid volcanic particles spewed into the air by the eruption, the observatory said.

The volcano's alert level was raised to warning status and the aviation color code went to red as scientists evaluate the eruption and associated hazards. In June, Kilauea erupted for several weeks, displaying fountains of red lava without threatening any communities or structures. Crowds of people flocked to the Big Island's Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which offered safe views of the lava.

### Escaped murderer still at large slips out of search area, steals van, tries to contact ex-co-workers

**PHOENIXVILLE, Pa.** (AP)—Authorities say an escaped murderer who has eluded capture since breaking out of a southeastern Pennsylvania prison a week and a half ago slipped out of the search area, changed his appearance, stole a dairy delivery van, abandoning it miles away and remained at large. Lt. Col. George Bivens of the Pennsylvania State Police said Sunday that Danelo Souza Cavalcante stole the unlocked van which had the keys inside sometime Saturday night about three-quarters of a mile from the northern perimeter of the search area where hundreds of law enforcement officers had been searching for him.

Baily's Dairy said on its Facebook page that the delivery van was stolen between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. Saturday "while we were still here working." The theft wasn't noticed for hours, and in the meantime Cavalcante, 34, traveled more than 20 miles (32 kilometers) northeast to East Pikeland Township and Phoenixville. Shortly before 10 p.m. Saturday he went to an East Pikeland Township home of a person he had worked with several years ago and asked to meet with him, police said.

### 11 people are hurt when walkway collapses during Maine's annual lighthouse event

**PORTLAND, Maine** (AP)—Eleven lighthouse enthusiasts were hurt when a walkway collapsed, sending people tumbling into mudflats below during an annual event that encourages tours of Maine's beloved beacons. The wooden walkway collapsed at Doubling Point Lighthouse in Arrowsic on Saturday afternoon. The lighthouse was open to the public as part of Maine Open Lighthouse Day, which is a day when the state's scenic lighthouses are open to the public. Five of the 11 injured people were taken to hospitals, said Bath Fire Department Deputy Chief Chris Cummings. The collapse of the bridge happened at low tide and caused some of the victims to fall eight to ten feet, and they landed in a somewhat rocky mudflat below, Cummings said. He said numerous public safety safety departments responded to the scene. "It was a team effort," said Cummings, whose department is in a small city

# Asia

## 'US outreach to Vietnam about providing global stability and not containing China'

**HANOI, Vietnam** (AP)—President Joe Biden said Sunday his visit to Vietnam to showcase stronger ties with Hanoi was not about trying to start a "cold war" with China, but rather was part of a broader effort to provide global stability by building U.S. relationships throughout Asia at a time of tensions with Beijing.

"It's not about containing China," Biden said at a news conference in Vietnam's capital after attending the Group of 20 summit in India. "It's about having a stable base."

The American president came to Hanoi as Vietnam was elevating the United States to its highest diplomatic status, comprehensive strategic partner. That is evidence of how far the relationship has evolved from what Biden referred to as the "bitter past" of the Vietnam War.

The expanded partnership reflects a broader effort across Asia to counter China's influence. Biden has said Vietnam wants to flex a degree of independence, and U.S. companies are seeking an alternative to imports from Chinese factories. He is pursuing possible allies while also trying to soothe tensions with China.

"I think we think too much in ... cold war terms," Biden said at his news conference. "It's not about that. It's about generating economic growth and stability in all parts of the world. And that's what we're trying to do."

He added: "We have an opportunity to strengthen alliances around the world to maintain stability. That's what this trip is all about."

Biden opened his news conference by saying he had "traveled around the world in five days," from Washington to New Delhi and now Hanoi, showcasing efforts by his administration to forge alliances. The president will stop in Alaska on the way home Monday to commemorate the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

In response to one question, Biden told reporters he had met with Chinese Premier Li Qiang while in India. The contact is the highest-level interaction between U.S. and Chinese officials since Biden and China's president, Xi Jinping, held talks at last year's G20 in Indonesia. Xi skipped the India talks and sent Li in his place.

"We talked about stability. ... It wasn't confrontational at all," Biden said.

The exchange, between G20 sessions Saturday, was brief, according to a senior Biden administration official. It was not clear who approached whom, but Biden was interested in seeing Li and underscoring his desire to stabilize the up-and-down relationship between the two countries, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Biden went into meetings with Vietnam's leaders after his arrival in the country. He welcomed the new partnership and said he hoped for progress on climate, the economy and other issues during his 24-hour stop in Hanoi.

"We can trace a 50-year arc of progress between our nations from conflict to normalization to this new elevated status," Biden said with Nguyễn Phú Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, at party headquarters.

Biden has described himself as being part of the "Vietnam generation" although he did not serve in a war. He was given five draft deferments and was exempted from military service because he had asthma as a teenager.

## UN drug agency: Afghanistan fastest-growing maker of methamphetamine

**ISLAMABAD** (AP)—Afghanistan is the world's fastest-growing maker of methamphetamine, a report from the United Nations drug agency said Sunday. The country is also a major opium producer and heroin source, even though the Taliban declared a war on narcotics after they returned to power in August 2021.

The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crimes, which published the report, said meth in Afghanistan is mostly made from legally available substances or extracted from the ephedra plant, which grows in the wild.

The report called Afghanistan's meth manufacturing a growing threat to national and regional health and security because it could disrupt the synthetic drug market and fuel addiction. It said seizures of meth suspected to have come from Afghanistan have been reported from the European Union and east Africa.

Annual meth seizure totals from inside the country rose from less than 100 kilograms (220 pounds) in 2019 to nearly 2,700 kilograms (6,000 pounds) in 2021, suggesting increased production, the report said. But it couldn't give a value for the country's meth supply, the quantities being produced, nor its domestic usage, because it doesn't have the data.

Angela Me, the chief of the UNODC's Research and Trend Analysis Branch, told The Associated Press that making meth, especially in Afghanistan, had several advantages over heroin or cocaine production.

"You don't need to wait for something to grow," said Me. "You don't need land. You just need the cooks and the know-how. Meth labs are mobile, they're hidden. Afghanistan also has the ephedra plant, which is not found in the biggest meth-producing countries: Myanmar and Mexico. It's legal in Afghanistan and it grows everywhere. But you need a lot of it."

Me said it was too early to assess what impact the Taliban's drug crackdown has had on meth supplies.

A spokesperson for the Interior Ministry, Abdul Mateen Qani, told the AP that the Taliban-run government has prohibited the cultivation, production, sale and use of all intoxicants and narcotics in Afghanistan.

He said authorities have destroyed 644 factories and around 12,000 acres of land where prohibited narcotics were cultivated, processed or produced. There have been more than 5,000 raids in which 6,000 people have been arrested.

"We cannot claim 100% that it is finished because people can still do these activities in secret. It is not possible to bring it to zero in such a short time," said Qani. "But we have a four-year strategic plan that narcotics in general and meth in particular will be finished."

A U.N. report published in November said that opium cultivation since the Taliban takeover increased by 32% over the previous year, and that opium prices rose following authorities' announcement of a cultivation ban in April 2022. Farmers' income from opium sales tripled from $425 million in 2021 to $1.4 billion in 2022.

The 2022 report also said that the illicit drug market thrived as Afghanistan's economy sharply contracted, making people open to illegal cultivation and trafficking for their survival.

Afghans are dealing with drought, severe economic hardship and the continued consequences of decades of war and natural disasters.

# World

### AFTER QUAKE THAT TOOK MORE THAN 2,100 PEOPLE

## Moroccans sleep in streets for third night

AP

Women cook inside a tent after they were displaced by the earthquake, in the town of Amizmiz, near Marrakech, Morocco, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023.

**AMIZMIZ, Morocco** (AP)—People in Morocco slept in the streets of Marrakech for a third straight night as soldiers and international aid teams in trucks and helicopters began to fan into remote mountain towns hit hardest by a historic earthquake.

The disaster killed more than 2,100 people—a number that is expected to rise—and the United Nations estimated that 300,000 people were affected by Friday night's magnitude 6.8 quake.

Amid offers from several countries, including the United States and France, Moroccan officials said Sunday that they are accepting international aid from just four countries: Spain, Qatar, Britain and the United Arab Emirates.

"The Moroccan authorities have carefully assessed the needs on the ground, bearing in mind that a lack of coordination in such cases would be counterproductive," the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

While some foreign search-and-rescue teams arrived on Sunday as an aftershock rattled Moroccans already in mourning and shock, other aid teams poised to deploy grew frustrated waiting for the government to officially request assistance.

"We know there is a great urgency to save people and dig under the remains of buildings," said Arnaud Fraisse, founder of Rescuers Without Borders, who had a team stuck in Paris waiting for the green light. "There are people dying under the rubble, and we cannot do anything to save them."

Help was slow to arrive in Amizmiz, where a whole chunk of the town of orange and red sandstone brick homes carved into a mountainside appeared to be missing. A mosque's minaret had collapsed.

"It's a catastrophe," said villager Salah Ancheu, 28. "We don't know what the future is. The aid remains insufficient."

Residents swept rubble off the main road into town and people cheered when trucks full of soldiers arrived. But they pleaded for more help.

"There aren't ambulances, there aren't police, at least for right now," Ancheu said, speaking about many parts of the region on Sunday morning.

Those left homeless — or fearing more aftershocks — slept outside Saturday, in the streets of the ancient city of Marrakech or under makeshift canopies in hard-hit Atlas Mountain towns like Moulay Brahim. Both there and in Amizmiz, residents worried most about the damage in hard-to-reach communities. The worst destruction was in rural communities that rely on unpaved roads that snake up the mountainous terrain covered by fallen rocks.

## Russian missile attack kills policeman and wounds 73 people in Zelenskyy's hometown

**KYIV, Ukraine** (AP)—A Russian missile attack Friday on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown killed one policeman and wounded at least 73 people, including nine policemen, Ukrainian officials said. Another attack in the southern Kherson region killed three people.

The strikes were among multiple Russian attacks across the country overnight, officials said. Meanwhile, Moscow is trying to strengthen its position politically with local elections in the four regions it illegally annexed last year, even though it doesn't fully control any of the four. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it does not recognize the "fake elections."

The strikes came days after 16 people were killed in a Russian attack on a market in eastern Ukraine and drone debris was found in Romania. That sparked fears among local residents that the war could spread into the NATO-member country bordering Ukraine.

Ten buildings were damaged in the attack on Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine on Friday. Nine policemen were among those wounded, according to Ihor Klymenko, Ukraine's Interior Minister. Photos posted by Klymenko on Telegram showed a building on fire, burnt timbers and emergency services evacuating the wounded. By evening, the number of wounded rose to 73, according to the Interior Ministry.

Three people were also killed on Friday after a Russian bomb struck the village of Odradokamianka in the Kherson region of southern Ukraine, Klymenko said.

Also on Friday, a funeral was held for an 18-year-old who was among 16 people killed Wednesday in a Russian attack on a market in Kostiantynivka in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region. The attack, which also wounded 33, turned the market into a fiery, blackened ruin and overshadowed a two-day visit by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken aimed at assessing Ukraine's three-month-old counteroffensive.

# Overdrive

# Auto review: Cruisin' Plum Crazy in the last Charger Hellcat

TNS

The 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak is a terror out of Woodward stoplights. But its sophisticated suspension also enables high performance when the roads gets twisty.

TNS

The Charger—thanks to odels like the 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak— is the best-selling large sedan in the US.

**By HENDY PAYNE**
The Detroit News

**BIRMINGHAM, Mich.**—It was a Plum Crazy Dream Cruise week.

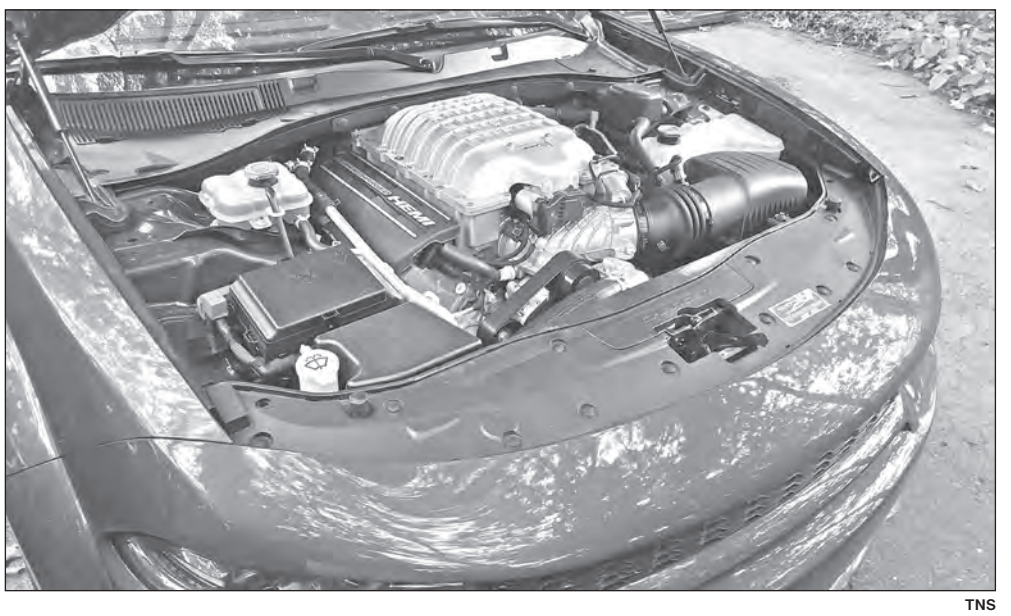
I drove a Plum Crazy-painted 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak on Woodward all weekend. Plum Crazy fun to drive. And it's Plum Crazy that this is the last year Dodge will sell this popular, iconic popular sedan.

If Corvette is Cruise King, then the Charger Widebody (and its Challenger sibling) is the Duke of Brawn. As I drove up and down Metro Detroit's main street last week, few sedans had more presence. Widebody fenders like Dwayne Johnson biceps, dish wheels like Captain America's shield, sinister LED running lights.

No one was more entertained than young kids. In Pontiac Cruise traffic, I saw the eyes of two boys in a pickup bed widen at the sight of the Purple People Eater on their bumper. Their fingers formed spinning air wheels and I obliged by shoving the Hellcat's T-shifter into NEUTRAL, then revving the engine.

WHEEEERAWWWRRR! WHEEEERAWWWRRR! WHEEEERAWWWRRR!

The Hellcat's sinister combination of supercharger and V-8 was intoxicating. More so with open road in front of it. Stoplight challenges from Mustangs, Camaros (even V6-powered Chargers wanting to know how they measured up to Brother Hellcat) invariably ended with their doors blown off into the grass. Plum Crazy.



TNS

The supercharged, 6.2-liter V8 engine in the 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Jailbreak produces 717 horsepower.

Since it was introduced in 2015, the Dodge SRT Hellcat has captivated American enthusiasts. It reduced a pack of media to giggling children at its first Challenger coupe test at Portland International Speedway. With more power than Thor and that shrieking, supercharged 6.2-liter Hemi V-8 sending chills up your spine, naming these beasts after a kitty seemed an understatement. Was Godzilla copyrighted? Kraken not available? Smaug?

"The Hellcat has 650 pound-feet of torque," said Dodge ringleader Tim Kuniskis at the time. "Top speed of 182 mph. Quarter-mile in 11.2 seconds. It's loud, obnoxious, pure evil."

And pure gold for Dodge. SRT Hellcat did the improbable: carrying Challenger to No. 1 in segment sales over the iconic Mustang and Camaro. I've always preferred the Charger sedan version because I'm a family man: with four doors, you could pick up the kids at school during the day, do launch controls out of Woodward stoplights by night.

No wonder Charger outsells Challenger 3:2, maintaining 80,00-90,000 in annual sales for the last nine years even as other sedans disappeared from the landscape. Kuniskis and his elves kept hammering out new, more outrageous models—Demon, Redeye, Jailbreak (which unlocks a flood of custom options)—dressed in outrageous colors: Destroyer Gray, Go Mango, Sinamon Stick, Sublime, Plum Crazy.

The SRT lineup peaked with the limited-edition, 1,025-horse Challenger Demon 170 that only a lucky few will own. One of them is Jay Leno, who picked up the keys for his 170 at Vinsetta Garage on Aug. 19 to kick off the Cruise.

I asked the comedian what other models in his 180-car, $52 million collection had over 1,000 horsepower. He rattled off four hot-rod mods like the biofuel EcoJet and a Rolls Royce Merlin-powered Franken-Bentley. But the Dodge was the only production car to achieve that distinction.

Heady stuff, but my base 717-horse Charger SRT Hellcat Jailbreak will do just fine, thank you. I chased Leno and Kuniskis up Woodward to Pasteiner's hobby shop and I swear my Charger got more looks. Paint it green and you'd swear it was the Hulk.

My customized $89,907 model came standard with the latest electronic goodies embedded in a distinct, bezeled carbon-fiber dash display that stands out in this day of hoodless tablet screens.

With goodies like Android Auto, audio controls on the back of the steering wheel, shift paddles, blind-spot assist, and rear-backup assist, Charger lacked few of the gizmos found on the $153,000, 617-horsepower twin-turbo-V8-powered BMW M8 that was also in my driveway for Cruise week.

"Which one shall we take to Woodward?" I asked my motorhead son, who was in town. "We'd be Plum Crazy not to take the Hellcat," he smiled.

Alas, the killjoys in Washington, D.C., have decided Dodge V-8s are mortal enemies of the polar bear. The last Hellcat will roll off the assembly line in Brampton, Ontario, at the end of this year lest Dodge incur the wrath of the pencil pushers (by the way, if you don't have $90K laying around, let me recommend the $56K Scat Pack. Same Widebody. Same 20-inch wheels. Same Plum Crazy paint).

If only I could have taken the bureaucrats for a ride in the country.

Midweek, I took Hulk up north to M-32 (the gas guzzler's 18.5-gallon tank meant I had over 300 miles of range), where the beast proved it could tap dance through the twisties as well as obliterate spotlights. Tap the SRT button on the center console and a menu of Drive Mode options appears. I haven't seen so much red meat since I ate at Fleming's.

AUTO mode is muscle enough, but TRACK mode takes Hulk to another level.

The suspension noticeably stiffened. Did it paw the earth as I aimed it at M-32? I destroyed a set of S-bends, the 4,500-pound chassis glued to the pavement before torching a short straight leading to another suite of bends. A special nod goes to the widebody fenders, which allow wider 12-inch Pirelli P Zero tires versus the standard body's 10.8-inchers.

Upshifts were brutal, however, belting me in the back. Electronics to the rescue again. I pulled to the side of the road and accessed CUSTOM mode. I selected TRACK settings for everything but the transmission, which I kept in STREET mode. Much better. Hulk continued to bound through the countryside but without knotting my spine with each upshift. As I grew comfortable with the eight-speed gearbox, paddle shifters worked nicely too.

All this on a dated 2005 chassis. Imagine what Hellcat could have accomplished had Dodge been updated like other sports cars in recent years—BMW M, Ford Mustang, Toyota Supra—with the latest metallurgy and tech.

So the sun sets on the 28th annual Woodward Dream Cruise—and the last model year Challenger and Chargers. They will live on at the Cruise for years to come, their muscled torsos a reminder of the second golden era of V-8 muscle cars.

## NUTS & BOLTS

### 2023 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak

- **Vehicle type**: Front-engine, rear-wheel-drive five-passenger sports sedan
- **Price**: $81,150 base, including $1,595 destination ($89,907 as tested)
- **Power plant**: Supercharged 6.2-liter V-8
- **Power**: 717 horsepower, 650 pound-feet of torque
- **Transmission**: Eight-speed automatic
- **Performance**: 0-60 mph, 3.5 seconds (Car and Driver); top speed, 196 mph
- **Weight**: 4,594 pounds
- **Fuel economy**: EPA est. 12 city/21 highway/15 combined
- **Report card**
- **Highs**: Bodybuilder good looks; visceral thrills all day long
- **Lows**: No adaptive cruise control offered; pricier than a Corvette
- **Overall**: 4 stars

# Life & Style

## ‘The Nun II’ conjures $32.6 million to top box office

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

AP

This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Taissa Farmiga as Sister Irene in New Line Cinema’s horror thriller “The Nun II.”

Like many horrors before it, bad reviews didn’t scare off moviegoers from buying tickets for “ The Nun II.” The sequel to the 2018 hit, released in 3,728 theaters by Warner Bros., topped the box office in its first weekend in North American theaters earning an estimated $32.6 million, the studio said Sunday.

AP’s Mark Kennedy wrote in his one star review that it’s “a movie that seems destined to pound a nail into this franchise’s undead coffin” and audiences gave it a C+ CinemaScore. But it hardly matters: Horror is perhaps the most reliably critic-proof genre, at least when it comes to opening weekend.

The Michael Graves-directed sequel starring Taissa Farmiga and Storm Reid fell far short of the debut for the first film ($53.8 million), but it’s still a solid launch. “The Nun” movies are part of the so-called Conjuring universe, which now has nine films, and $2.1 billion in box office, to its name. The sequel also played well internationally, picking up $52.7 million from 69 markets (Mexico being the strongest with $8.9 million) and boosting its global debut to $85.3 million.

“To have a horror universe is really powerful in terms of the revenue generating potential,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “It’s a great bet that Warners made on the horror moviegoing experience never waning.”

And there are many more scary movies on the calendar through the fall including “A Death in Venice,” which opens next week, “Saw X” on Sept. 29 and “The Exorcist: Believer” on Oct. 6.

“The Nun II” bumped Denzel Washington’s “ Equalizer 3 ” to second place in its second weekend. The Columbia Pictures release added $12.1 million, bringing its domestic grosses to $61.9 million and its worldwide earnings to $107.7 million.

Third place went to another new movie: The third installment of Nia Vardalos’s “My Big Fat Greek Wedding,” which arrives 21 years after the first film became a massive sleeper hit earning some $369 million against a $5 million production budget. Released by Focus Features in 3,650 theaters, the third film earned an estimated $10 million, overwhelmingly driven by female audiences (71%) who were 25 or older (83%).

Vardalos wrote, directed and stars in “Greek Wedding 3,” which brings back John Corbett and takes the gang to Greece. AP’s Jocelyn Noveck wrote in her review that the movie, which has gotten mostly poor marks, is “like a thrice-warmed piece of baklava.”

The Indian revenge thriller, “Jawan,” starring Shah Rukh Khan, opened in fourth place with $6.2 million from only 813 locations. It was released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. Khan, a Bollywood superstar, also led another box office sensation this year, “Pathaan,” which has made $130 million worldwide.

“Barbie,” which comes to VOD on Tuesday, dropped to No. 5 after 8 triumphant weeks with $5.9 million from 3,281 locations. The Warner Bros. film has now made $620.5 million domestically.

1. **“The Nun II,”** *$32.6 million.*
2. **“The Equalizer 3,”** *$12.1 million.*
3. **“My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3,”** *$10 million.*
4. **“Jawan,”** *$6.2 million.*
5. **“Barbie,”** *$5.9 million.*
6. **“Blue Beetle,”** *$3.8 million.*
7. **“Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story,”** *$3.4 million.*
8. **“Oppenheimer,”** *$3 million.*
9. **“Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem,”** *$2.6 million.*
10. **“Bottoms,”** *$2.1 million.*

## In Toronto, Paul Simon takes bow with new career-spanning documentary

AP

Paul Simon performs at Global Citizen Live in Central Park on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, in New York.

**TORONTO** (AP)—After a three-and-a-half-hour documentary on his life, Paul Simon had only sympathy for the audience.

“You’re probably exhausted,” Simon told the crowd after the premiere of Alex Gibney’s “In Restless Dreams: The Music of Paul Simon” on Sunday at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The 81-year-old Simon, himself, hadn’t watched the film before its debut, and he didn’t watch it Sunday, either. “I’ll get up the courage to see it, no doubt,” he promised.

The film, which is seeking distribution at TIFF, is an expansive look at Simon’s decades-spanning career, from growing up in Queens, New York, with Art Garfunkel to the success of “Graceland,” the sensational 1986 album he made with South African musicians.

“In Restless Dreams,” which takes its name from a lyric in “The Sound of Silence” (“In restless dreams I walked alone”), also intimately captures Simon painstakingly assembling his latest album, “Seven Psalms,” which was released in May.

He began the album, his first in several years, he says, after a dream in 2019 in which he envisioned an album of seven songs. His work at his home studio in Wimberly, Texas, was made more difficult by Simon’s hearing loss in his left ear, throwing off his musical equilibrium.

“I haven’t accepted it entirely, but I’m beginning to,” Simon told the audience of his hearing loss in a post-screening Q&A.

Simon reached out to Gibney, the veteran documentarian of “Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief” and “Taxi to the Dark Side,” after admiring his 2015 documentary “Sinatra: All or Nothing at All.” Though the cameras took some adjusting to, Simon was content for Gibney to assemble a narrative around his life.

## Prior postpartum issues create unease for family

DEAR ABBY: When my grandchild was born five years ago, my daughter suffered from severe postpartum depression and had to be hospitalized. Her father, who is not in good health, and I lived seven hours away and traveled as often as we could to help out. At one point my son-in-law called and told me she was catatonic and not responding to him. It was terrifying.

Now, these few years later, her husband is pressuring my daughter to have another child. My daughter is understandably afraid, and I’m afraid for her. She thinks her husband has forgotten what they went through. I know it’s not my decision to make, but she’s my daughter, and I worry about her well-being. She knows how I feel but tells me she feels caught between my feelings and those of her husband. She told me I won’t always be around and she will have to deal with his resentment.

I don’t understand why he would want my daughter to risk another bout of the PPD she suffered the first time. I don’t want to sound critical of him, but he can be very selfish. Fearing for my daughter’s life after the birth of her child was one of the most stressful things I’ve ever experienced. Can you please advise me what to say to my daughter, or should I just keep quiet?

TRAUMATIZED IN ALABAMA

**DEAR TRAUMATIZED: I am sure your daughter is already aware of your opinion. That’s why I’m suggesting that, when you talk to her about this, you urge her to CONSULT HER DOCTOR regarding another pregnancy and take her cues from someone in the medical community who knows her history.**

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My father is a narcissist and pathological liar who all his life has taken advantage of people. He fell recently and had to go to the hospital. While he was hospitalized, we discovered he had lied to his landlord about serving in the military among a slew of other deceptions. The landlord is now in the process of evicting him—not only because of the lies, but also because the hoarding level of filth has damaged the house.

Dad is emotionally abusive and cares nothing about others unless they can help him make money, which has left him with no money and no friends. He has no conscience, no empathy and no consideration for the feelings of others. The last straw was when he demanded my husband and I take him into our house or else he would “kill himself.”

Even if we had a good relationship with him, my father is disabled and could never climb the stairs to where the bedrooms are, so it’s physically impossible for him to stay with us. After finding a social worker to assist him, I have decided to walk away for good. Am I selfish to disassociate from an absolutely toxic person even if he is family?

## DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

CLEAN BREAK IN NEW JERSEY

**DEAR CLEAN BREAK: Consulting a social worker was a good idea. The ball is now in the court of a professional. Leave it there because it IS OK to disassociate from someone who lies, steals glory and uses everyone he encounters. To take him in, even if there wasn’t the issue of the stairs, would have been a huge mistake.**

■■■

*Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

TODAY FOR SHOW AND TELL, I HAVE AN UTTERLY AMAZING WHISTLE! I'LL DEMONSTRATE.
TWEEEET
WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT THAT?! IT SOUNDS LIKE AN ORDINARY WHISTLE. TO ME!
IT CAN ONLY BE HEARD BY UGLY CRETINS.
I'LL GET YOU AT RECESS, CALVIN.

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I'M CUTER THAN YOU, AND I'LL ALWAYS BE CUTER THAN YOU
TRUE...
BUT I'M BIGGER THAN YOU, AND I'LL ALWAYS BE BIGGER THAN YOU
JIM DAVIS 9-12

## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

LOOKIN' GOOD, NEWMAN!
HA. THANKS, LARRY. I'M TRYING!
NICE SPEEDO, BY THE WAY!
YOU RUN ENOUGH, YOU'LL LOOK THIS GOOD!
WILL IT MAKE ME THAT HAIRY, TOO?
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE DREAMS, ADAM!
9-12

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

OKAY, WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?
SQUIRRELS. THEY GIVE ME ANXIETY.
NO PROBLEM. THERE'S A NEW MEDICINE TO HELP DOGS WITH SQUIRREL ANXIETY.
HOW NEW?
THEY HAVEN'T EVEN DECIDED ON AN OLD POP SONG TO USE IN THEIR TV COMMERCIALS.

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

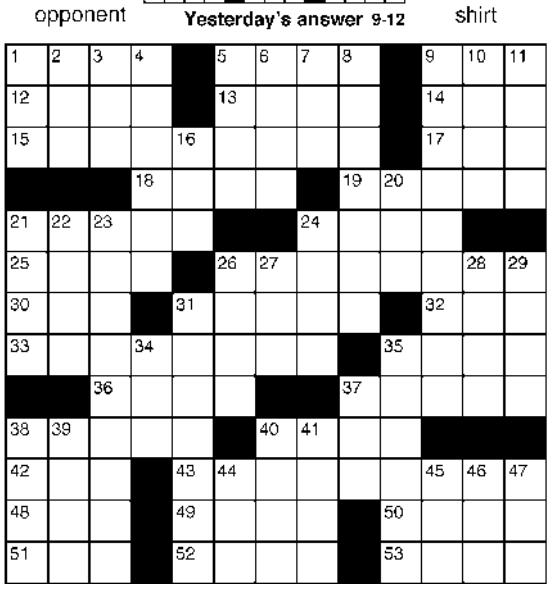
**ACROSS**
1 Jeopardize
5 "Ray Donovan" star Schreiber
9 Govt. lender
12 Bailiwick
13 Farm measure
14 Cauldron
15 Emmy-winning "Hacks" actress
17 HIV-treating drug
18 Viewed
19 "The Jetsons" boy
21 Joy of "The View"
24 Singer India.—
25 Pub orders
26 New York City nickname
30 "Angie" actor
31 Asian noodles
32 DDE's opponent
33 "Ozark" and "Succession"
35 Enfold
36 Actor LaBeouf
37 Sucker
38 Pop star John
40 Think (over)
42 Sheep call
43 Fruity summer pastry
48 "It's c-c-cold!"
49 Elevator name
50 Perry's creator
51 Perched
52 "That — close one!"
53 Ascend

**DOWN**
1 British rule of India
2 Rage
3 Briny expanse
4 Sunflower State
5 Unconvincing
6 Volunteer's words
7 Mess up
8 November honoree
9 Repair shop piece
10 Chucklehead
11 Lawyer (Abbr.)
16 Sun. talk
20 Back talk
21 Homer's son
22 Mountain ht.
23 Early advantage
24 Ice and Bronze
26 Crimson Tide, briefly
27 "— Believer"
28 Meadows
29 Glimpse
31 Colorful arc
34 Plato's P
35 — White ("Breaking Bad" protagonist)
37 Layer
38 Recedes
39 Zhivago's love
40 Hosp. scans
41 Celestial bear
44 LAX info
45 Shapiro of NPR
46 "Kidnapped" monogram
47 Casual shirt

**Solution time: 22 mins.**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | E | D | S | ■ | T | A | D | ■ | P | S | S | T |
| I | G | U | E | S | S | O | ■ | A | T | O | M | ■ |
| G | O | O | D | H | O | P | E | ■ | N | A | L | A |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | O | A | S | ■ | S | A | I | G | O | N |
| B | R | I | N | G | ■ | A | G | I | N | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| O | O | N | A | ■ | C | L | O | R | I | E | S | ■ |
| A | N | D | ■ | B | O | L | O | S | ■ | C | A | I |
| ■ | A | Y | K | H | O | Y | D | ■ | J | O | V | I |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | I | D | S | ■ | M | A | N | F | S |
| T | A | I | P | E | I | ■ | E | A | R | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| O | V | A | L | ■ | D | A | R | N | G | O | O | D |
| M | O | M | A | ■ | E | A | S | Y | O | N | M | E |
| E | W | A | N | ■ | A | S | E | ■ | N | O | G | S |

**Yesterday's answer 9-12**



**STUMPED?** For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Ryan Potter, 28; Emmy Rossum, 37; Jennifer Hudson, 42; Benjamin McKenzie, 45.

**Happy Birthday:** Don't give away your secrets. Be discreet regarding what you know and the changes you adopt. Stay focused on your endgame, and stop fretting over things you cannot control. Listen to your inner voice, be true to yourself, take pride in your work and embrace challenges. You have plenty to gain if you are willing to go the distance. Your numbers are 4, 15, 22, 28, 31, 39, 45.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Do something exhilarating. Once you start, you'll get into the groove and enjoy the process. A high-energy approach to life and love will help you tap into something you excel at and enjoy. Don't settle for less when you can achieve more. ✪✪✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Stick close to home and protect yourself and your possessions from anyone trying to exploit you. Put your energy into doing your best and avoid appearing vulnerable to someone trying to compete with you. Keep your thoughts and plans simple and doable. ✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Reach out to friends and relatives who share your sentiments; together, you will accomplish something to strengthen your bond. Protect against people who don't share your beliefs or are diligent regarding changing who you are and what you want. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* An orderly home and lifestyle will put your mind at ease. Ask an expert for input and follow through with noteworthy suggestions when in doubt. A networking function, fundraiser or self-improvement project will occupy your time and encourage you to move forward with an open mind. ✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Emotional issues will surface if you jump into something prematurely. Be a responsible observer and spare yourself grief. Focus on self-improvement and tidying up loose ends. By decluttering your life, you'll clear your head and find something meaningful to pursue. ✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* View options, decide what you want to achieve and don't waste time on trivialities that won't make a difference to the desired outcome. Take the path that will get you where you want to go, even if it is the road less traveled. ✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Station yourself where you feel most welcome or pursue something that makes you feel helpful and good about yourself. Dedicate your thoughts and time to making a difference and doing things your way. It's OK to have personal preferences. Initiate your dreams with passion. ✪✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Be a friendly observer, but don't get involved in something that might jeopardize your time, position or reputation. Dedicate your time and skills to worthwhile improvements and contributions. Say no to waste, excess and unnecessary change. Strive for peace of mind. ✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Have confidence in yourself and what you can accomplish. Walk away from negativity and those using misleading tactics to distract you from the path that beckons you. Think for yourself, learn to say no and love the person you choose to be. ✪✪✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Strive for perfection, get the most out of whatever situation you encounter and speak the truth. Be the one to set an example and open your doors to those who need a pep talk, but don't offer to pay for someone else's mistake. ✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Set a budget, put a plan in motion that contributes to your security and ease stress. Put time and effort into how you represent yourself. Build the life you want and associate with those who fit a profile that makes you feel comfortable. ✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Get in the game and have some fun. Explore what's possible and affordable. Distance yourself from frivolous people eager to part you from your cash, position or reputation. Choose your path and stick to it, regardless of the decisions others make. ✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are sensitive, underrated and meticulous. You are persistent and unique.

*✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

# SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 | 5 | | 7 | 3 | | |
| | 3 | | | | 2 | 4 | | |
| | | 4 | 9 | 3 | | 6 | 2 | |
| 8 | | | | | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| | 6 | | | | 1 | 7 | 5 | |
| 5 | | 1 | 6 | 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | 8 | 2 | | | 9 | 1 | 7 |
| | | | 8 | | | | 4 | 6 |
| | 5 | 6 | | | | 2 | | |

Difficulty: ★★ 9/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| 9 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| 3 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 9 |

Difficulty: ★ 9/11

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

**BUNDLES** Solution: 6 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | E | W | S | P | A | P | E | R | Y | T | N | E | L | P |
| P | E | G | A | G | G | U | L | Y | M | O | T | A | N | A |
| A | Z | R | N | O | I | T | A | N | I | B | M | O | C | R |
| C | I | C | V | I | F | L | O | W | E | R | S | S | O | C |
| K | N | S | O | E | H | R | L | L | O | R | U | E | M | E |
| A | A | H | Y | N | S | T | E | C | E | P | S | X | P | L |
| G | G | I | M | E | T | H | O | B | P | K | T | O | A | G |
| E | R | N | O | W | K | A | I | L | M | L | E | B | C | R |
| N | O | G | N | H | T | F | I | P | C | U | E | P | T | O |
| I | R | L | E | O | E | E | S | N | P | B | L | U | P | C |
| Z | D | E | Y | L | S | T | A | S | E | I | R | O | A | E |
| A | E | S | C | E | O | T | O | N | A | R | N | R | C | R |
| G | R | S | C | R | A | N | E | S | E | M | A | G | K | I |
| A | U | D | E | I | T | N | E | M | P | I | U | Q | E | E |
| M | U | L | T | I | P | L | E | E | G | A | R | O | T | S |

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Anatomy, Boxes, Bulk, Clothing, Combination, Compact, Container, Crane, Equipment, Flowers, Games, Groceries, Group, Keys, Luggage, Lumber, Magazine, Mass, Money, Multiple, Muscle Fibers, Nerves, Newspaper, Order, Organize, Package, Packet, Parcel, Plenty, Roll, Shingles, Shipping, Steel, Storage, Store, Supplies, Tied, Toys, Whole

**Yesterday's Answer: Well-liked**

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 56 through 73, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

# Djokovic wins the US Open for 24th Grand Slam title

**NEW YORK** (AP) — Halfway through a second set that lasted 1 hour, 44 minutes, a test of tenacity as much as talent amid a U.S. Open final as exhausting as it was exhilarating, Novak Djokovic and Daniil Medvedev engaged each other in a 32-stroke point.

It was among many such elongated exchanges between two men whose styles are nearly mirror images, and Djokovic capitulated by netting a backhand. He fell to his back and stayed down, chest heaving. The crowd roared. Djokovic sat up but remained on the ground for a bit. The crowd roared some more, appreciating the effort, saluting the entertainment.

Using every ounce of his energy and some serve-and-volley guile—an old man with new tricks—Djokovic emerged for a 6-3, 7-6 (5), 6-3 victory over Medvedev at Flushing Meadows to claim a historic 24th Grand Slam title on Sunday night in a match more closely contested than the straight-set score indicated.

"I never imagined that I would be here standing with you talking about 24 Slams. I never thought that would be the reality," said Djokovic, a 36-year-old from Serbia and the tournament's oldest male champion in the Open era, which dates to 1968. "But the last couple of years, I felt I have a chance, I have a shot for history, and why not grab it if it's presented?"

He moved one major singles title ahead of Serena Williams and is the first player to win 24 in the Open era. Margaret Court also collected a total of 24, but 13 of those came before professionals were admitted to the Slam events.

There were snapshots, particularly in the miniseries of a second set, when it appeared Djokovic was faltering. After some of the most grueling points—and there were many—he would lean over with hands on knees or use his racket for support or pause to stretch his legs. And then, suddenly, he would snap to.

"That's Novak," Medvedev said. "No matter what, he can be there."

There was an inescapable sense, on the part of the participants and any observer, that whichever man succumbed in the second set would be unable to overcome it.

"I don't think I have ever played a longer set in my life," Djokovic said.

AP

Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, holds up the championship trophy after defeating Daniil Medvedev, of Russia, in the men's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023, in New York.

Medvedev's take on that segment of the match?

"Oh, regrets, for sure," he said. "Should have won it."

Medvedev came within a single point of taking that set while returning at 6-5. Djokovic rushed the net behind his serve, and while Medvedev had an opening for a backhand passing shot by hitting it down the line, he instead went cross-court, and Djokovic had it covered. In the tiebreaker, Medvedev led 5-4 before Djokovic grabbed the next three points.

One key adjustment: When Djokovic was looking more bedraggled, he turned to serve-and-volleying, not his usual sort of tactic. He won 20 of 22 points he played that way, and 37 of 44 overall on the points when he went to the net, some with spectacular volleys or half-volleys at angles a pool shark would appreciate.

Medvedev never countered.

"I should have been less stubborn," Medvedev said.

This was the 27-year-old Russian's fifth major final and he is 1-4, with two losses apiece to Djokovic and Rafael Nadal. The victory came against Djokovic in the 2021 final at Flushing Meadows, stopping a bid for the first men's calendar-year Grand Slam in more than a half-century.

That weighed on Djokovic.

"I really did my best in the last 48 hours not to allow the importance of the moment and what's on the line get to my head," Djokovic said Sunday, "because two years ago that's what happened, and I underperformed."

Djokovic's fourth championship in New York, where he was unable to compete a year ago because he isn't vaccinated against COVID-19, goes alongside 10 trophies from the Australian Open, seven from Wimbledon and three from the French Open, extending his lead among men. Nadal is next with 22; Roger Federer retired with 20.

When it was over, Medvedev tapped Djokovic on the chest as they talked at the net. Djokovic flung his racket, put his arms up and then knelt on the court, head bowed. Then he found his daughter for a hug. His son and wife came next, along with his parents and his team.

"This is one of the biggest achievements in (sports) history," said his coach, Goran Ivanisevic. "We're not talking about tennis. We are talking generally in sports."

# Braves become first MLB team to clinch playoff spot

**ATLANTA** (AP)—The Atlanta Braves became the first team to clinch a playoff berth, rallying past the Pittsburgh Pirates 5-2 on Sunday as Matt Olson went 2 for 3 with three RBIs.

Atlanta (93-49) secured at least a wild card and reached the postseason for the sixth straight year, the second-longest streak in franchise history. The Braves hold a 15-game lead over second-place Philadelphia in the NL East.

## YANKEES 4, BREWERS 3, 13 INNINGS

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Milwaukee rookie right fielder Sal Frelick preserved a no-hit bid with a leaping catch at the wall of Anthony Volpe's drive in the 10th inning to keep the game scoreless, but New York rallied when Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run homer in the 12th off Andrew Chafin and Kyle Higashioka hit a winning double in the 13th against Hoby Milner (2-1).

After Corbin Burnes pitched eight hitless innings, Devin Williams worked a 1-2-3 ninth and Abner Uribe a hitless 10th. Tyrone Taylor hit a run-scoring single in the 11th as Milwaukee went for the first 11-inning no-hitter in major league history, but Oswaldo Cabrera hit a tying RBI double with one out in the bottom half off Joel Payamps.

## RAYS 6, MARINERS 3

**ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.** (AP)—Zach Eflin (14-8) tied for the AL wins lead as Tampa Bay took three of four. The Rays have a 7 1/2-game lead over Toronto for the top AL wild card, while Seattle trails AL West-leading Houston by 2 1/2 games.

Eflin allowed three runs and seven hits in five innings and four pitchers combined for scoreless, two-hit relief, with Pete Fairbanks working the ninth for his 21st save,

## ASTROS 12, PADRES 2

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Kyle Tucker hit two RBI triples in an eight-run sixth inning as Houston routed San Diego.

Tucker became the 12th major leaguer with two triples in an inning and first since Colorado's Cory Sullivan on April 9, 2006, at San Diego.

Jose Altuve homered and drove in three runs for Houston, which has won five of six to open a 2 1/2-game AL West lead over Seattle. The defending World Series champion Astros (82-62) are a season-high 20 games over .500.

## CUBS 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

**CHICAGO** (AP)—Christopher Morel, Cody Bellinger and Dansby Swanson each hit a solo homer in the third inning, and Chicago snapped a three-game skid with a victory over Arizona.

Swanson added two singles and Kyle Hendricks (6-7) tossed 5 2/3 effective innings to help the Cubs strengthen their hold on the second NL wild-card spot. Arizona's four-game winning streak ended, but the Diamondbacks have a half-game lead over Miami for the third and final wild card.

## BLUE JAYS 5, ROYALS 2

**TORONTO** (AP)—Kevin Kiermaier hit a tiebreaking homer in the seventh inning and Toronto took advantage of three consecutive wild pitches by Cole Ragans to complete a three-game sweep of Kansas City.

The Blue Jays hold the second AL wild card by one game over Seattle and 1 1/2 over Texas, which begins a four-game series in Toronto on Monday.

## RED SOX 7, ORIOLES 3

**BOSTON** (AP)—Triston Casas hit a three-run homer off Cole Irvin as Boston averted a three-game sweep with a rain-delayed victory that halted Baltimore's seven-game winning streak.

A day after getting 23 hits in a 13-12 loss, the Red Sox wiped out a 3-0 deficit with two runs in each of the third and fourth innings against Grayson Rodriguez (5-4).

## RANGERS 9, ATHETICS 4

**ARLINGTON, Texas** (AP)—Marcus Semien homered twice among his four hits, Corey Seager went deep for the 30th time this season and Texas won consecutive games for the first time in September.

Andrew Heaney (10-6), the odd man out of the Rangers' rotation with All-Star right-hander Nathan Eovaldi back from the injured list, struck out six over 3 2/3 scoreless innings after taking over for Jon Gray in the third.

## DODGERS 7, NATIONALS 3

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—James Outman homered and Los Angeles moved closer to another division title with a victory over Washington.

Jason Heyward drove in two runs for the Dodgers, who lead the NL West by 13 games over Arizona. Los Angeles reduced its magic number to six for wrapping up the division crown.

## MARLINS 5, PHILLIES 4

**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—Bryan De La Cruz hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning and Miami, held hitless until the seventh, rallied past Philadelphia.

Dane Myers broke up a no-hit bid by Phillies starter Ranger Suárez with a one-out double in the seventh. Yuli Gurriel drove in two runs for the Marlins, who pulled within a half-game of Arizona for the final National League wild card. Miami has won eight of 10 after taking two of three games from Philadelphia.

## REDS 7, CARDINALS 1

**CINCINNATI** (AP)—Hunter Greene allowed one hit in six innings, Joey Votto homered on his 40th birthday and Cincinnati stopped a three-game losing streak by beating St. Louis.

Votto connected after missing 16 games with discomfort in his surgically repaired right shoulder. Jonathan India, Will Benson and TJ Friedl also hit solo home runs as the Reds avoided a three-game sweep.

## GIANTS 6, ROCKIES 3

**SAN FRANCISCO** (AP)—Keaton Winn had a career-high nine strikeouts in six innings to get his first major league win, and San Francisco completed a three-game sweep of Colorado.

Thairo Estrada, Mitch Haniger and Joc Peterson homered for the Giants, who edged back into the playoff race with three straight wins following a six-game slide.

## METS 2, TWINS 0

**MINNEAPOLIS** (AP)—DJ Stewart hit a two-run double in the ninth inning and New York overcame a career-high 14 strikeouts by Minnesota starter Pablo López to avoid a three-game sweep.

López went eight innings for the Twins

.

## ANGELS 2, GUARDIANS 1

**ANAHEIM, Calif.** (AP)—Kenny Rosenberg gave up one run over five innings to earn his first career win as Los Angeles held off Cleveland.

Mike Moustakas and Randal Grichuk each drove in a run for the Angels, who took advantage of two balk calls on Guardians starter Tanner Bibee in the third. Cleveland lost three of four in the series and is 7 1/2 games behind first-place Minnesota in the AL Central.

## TIGERS 3, WHITE SOX 2

**DETROIT** (AP)—Sawyer Gipson-Long won his major league debut and Spencer Torkelson hit a two-run double in a three-run third inning as Detroit beat Chicago.

Gipson-Long (1-0) threw 5 1/3 innings, allowing two runs and four hits. Four relievers finished for the Tigers, with Alex Lange getting his 23rd save.

# Cowboys score early on defense and special teams, embarrass Giants, 40-0

AP

Dallas Cowboys' Chauncey Golston, right, celebrates during the second half of an NFL football game against the New York Giants, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023, in East Rutherford, N.J.

**EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.** (AP)—Noah Igbinoghene returned a blocked field goal 58 yards for a touchdown on the opening series, DaRon Bland scored on a pick-6 later in the first quarter and the Dallas Cowboys embarrassed the New York Giants again, posting a season-opening 40-0 victory Sunday night.

Tony Pollard scored on two short touchdown runs for Dallas, which forced three turnovers and sacked Daniel Jones seven times in shutting down New York's supposedly improved offense. The Cowboys beat the Giants for the fifth straight time and 12th in 13th meetings.

The shutout loss was the largest between the teams, topping the Cowboys' 35-0 win in 1995, also in a season opener at the Meadowlands. It was also the Cowboys' biggest shutout victory, topping their 38-0 win over the Baltimore Colts in 1978.

The Cowboys didn't need much from quarterback Dak Prescott and the offense. They got two field goals from new kicker Brandon Aubrey and Pollard got Dallas' first TD on offense on a 2-yard run midway through the second quarter to push the advantage to 26-0 at halftime.

Jones finished 15 of 28 for 104 yards with a quarterback rating of 32.4.

## RAVENS 25, TEXANS 9

**BALTIMORE** (AP)—J.K. Dobbins ran for an early touchdown before leaving with a torn Achilles tendon, Justice Hill scored twice in the second half and Baltimore beat Houston.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh announced Dobbins' injury after the game and said he would miss the rest of the season, a significant blow to Baltimore's offense.

Lamar Jackson turned the ball over twice, and Baltimore looked out of sync for much of its first game with new offensive coordinator Todd Monken. But the Ravens kept Houston and rookie quarterback C.J. Stroud out of the end zone.

## DOLPHINS 36, CHARGERS 34

**INGLEWOOD, Calif.** (AP)—Tua Tagovailoa threw for 466 yards and three touchdowns, Tyreek Hill had 11 catches for 215 yards and two scores, and Miami rallied past Los Angeles.

Hill caught a 4-yard pass in the right corner of the end zone with 1:45 remaining for the clinching touchdown as the Dolphins finished with 536 yards of offense.

Hill also had a 35-yard score on a go route late in the third quarter to put the Dolphins up 27-24.

## EAGLES 25, PATRIOTS 20

**FOXBOROUGH, Mass.** (AP)—Jalen Hurts threw a touchdown pass and Darius Slay had a 70-yard interception return for a score as Philadelphia built a big early lead, then hung on to beat New England.

The Eagles capitalized on two early turnovers by the Patriots, spoiling a day when New England honored former quarterback Tom Brady at halftime.

Hurts was 22-of-33 for 170 yards and the TD but had a costly fumble in fourth quarter that gave the Patriots a chance. Jake Elliott kicked four field goals for Philadelphia, which didn't reach the end zone after the first quarter.

## 49ERS 30, STEELERS 7

**PITTSBURGH** (AP)—Brock Purdy threw for 220 yards and two touchdowns to Brandon Aiyuk in his return from offseason elbow surgery, and San Francisco beat Pittsburgh.

Purdy, who led the 49ers to the NFC championship game as a rookie, completed 19 of 29 passes, including scoring strikes of 8 and 19 yards to Aiyuk.

Christian McCaffery ran for 151 yards and caught three passes for 17 more for the 49ers.

## BROWNS 24, BENGALS 3

**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Deshaun Watson ran for a touchdown and threw for another, and Cleveland's defense bottled up Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow.

Watson bolted for a 13-yard TD late in the first half, making the kind of dynamic play the Browns envisioned when they signed him to a $230 million contract in 2022. Watson missed 11 games last season for violating the league's personal conduct policy but is in uniform from the start this season.

He added a 3-yard TD pass in the fourth quarter to tight end Harrison Bryant, and Watson converted the 2-point try with a run up the middle.

## BUCCANEERS 20, VIKINGS 17

**MINNEAPOLIS** (AP)—Baker Mayfield recovered from a rough start to throw two touchdown passes without a turnover in his debut for Tampa Bay, which forced three first-half turnovers by Minnesota.

Chase McLaughlin matched his career long with a 57-yard field goal for the lead with 5:10 left, and the Buccaneers forced a three-and-out on each of the Vikings' last two possessions.

Mayfield, the first overall pick in the 2018 draft who landed with his fourth team in three years to take over for the retired Tom Brady, completed 21 of 34 passes after a 3-for-11 start.

## PACKERS 38, BEARS 20

**CHICAGO** (AP)—Jordan Love looked like he might be ready to follow in the footsteps of Brett Favre and Aaron Rodgers, throwing for three touchdowns to lead Green Bay past Chicago.

Aaron Jones ran for a touchdown and caught one, helping the Packers pull away in the second half for their ninth straight win over the Bears. Green Bay was 25-5 against Chicago with Rodgers, including the playoffs.

Love completed 15 of 27 passes for 245 yards and posted a 123.2 rating in his second career start. Jones caught two passes for 86 yards, including a 51-yarder off a screen that led to a scoring run for him in the third quarter.

Romeo Doubs added two touchdown catches. Quay Walker returned an interception 37 yards for a TD, and the Packers won for the 13th time in 14 games at Soldier Field.

## RAMS 30, SEAHAWKS 13

**SEATTLE** (AP)—Matthew Stafford threw for 334 yards even without favorite target Cooper Kupp, Kyren Williams ran for two touchdowns, and Los Angeles stunned Seattle.

Stafford was brilliant picking apart Seattle's secondary for the 58th 300-yard passing game of his career. He did it without Kupp, who will miss at least the first four games with a hamstring injury.

Rookie Puka Nacua had 10 catches for 119 yards and was targeted 15 times in the first game of his career. Tutu Atwell had a career-high 119 yards on six catches. And the Rams were at their best on third downs, where they converted 11 of 17 chances.

Los Angeles had 27 first downs, 426 total yards and 39:23 time of possession.

Seattle had just 12 yards of offense and only one first down in the second half.

## RAIDERS 17, BRONCOS 16

**DENVER** (AP)—Jimmy Garoppolo threw two touchdown passes to fellow newcomer Jakobi Meyers in their debuts for Las Vegas, which spoiled Sean Payton's first game as Denver's coach.

The Raiders stretched their winning streak over their AFC West rivals to seven games despite the absence of star pass rusher Chandler Jones, who's involved in a feud with the front office.

Garoppolo, who came to Las Vegas after six seasons in San Francisco, and Meyers, who joined the Raiders after four seasons in New England, connected 10 times for 81 yards, including touchdowns of 3 and 6 yards.

The second came with 6:34 remaining, erasing Denver's 16-10 lead.

Russell Wilson looked much better under Payton than he did last year with Nathaniel Hackett at the helm, completing 27 of 34 passes for 177 yards and two touchdowns without an interception.

## JAGUARS 31, COLTS 21

**INDIANAPOLIS** (AP) — Tank Bigsby made up for a big mistake by scoring the go-ahead touchdown and Travis Etienne Jr. added a 26-yard scoring run to seal Jacksonville's win over Indianapolis.

The AFC South champs snapped a five-game losing streak at Lucas Oil Stadium.

DeForest Buckner stripped the ball from Trevor Lawrence on a sack and then scooped up Bigsby's subsequent fumble before sprinting 26 yards to give Indy a 21-17 lead late in the third quarter.

Three series later, Bigsby's 1-yard TD plunge gave Jacksonville a 24-21 lead with 5:14 to play.

Colts rookie Anthony Richardson was intercepted on the next series and three plays later, Etienne broke free to put away the victory for the Jaguars.

Richardson became the third-youngest quarterback to start an NFL season opener at age 21, going 24 of 37 for 223 yards, one TD and the interception. He also had 10 carries for 40 yards and a touchdown while being sacked four times. He left the game in the final minute after getting shaken up on a run near the goal line.

## SAINTS 16, TITANS 15

**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)—Derek Carr passed for 305 yards and a touchdown in a difficult but successful debut for New Orleans, which held on to beat Tennessee.

The Saints' defense did not allow a touchdown, intercepted Ryan Tannehill three times, sacked him three times, and stopped Tennessee on 10 of 12 third down plays.

Chris Olave caught eight passes for 112 yards for New Orleans, while Rashid Shaheed had five receptions for 89 yards and the game's lone touchdown. Michael Thomas, who missed the final 14 games last season, returned to catch five passes for 61 yards.

The teams traded field goals for most of the game before New Orleans finally found the end zone with 1:23 left in the third quarter. Carr pump-faked and lofted a pass that Shaheed hauled in for a 19-yard score to make it 16-9.

## FALCONS 24, PANTHERS 10

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Bijan Robinson outshined top overall pick Bryce Young in their NFL debuts, leading Atlanta past Carolina.

Young was intercepted twice by Jessie Bates in a rough start for the former Alabama star who is being counted on to lead a resurgence for the Panthers.

Robinson, selected at No. 8 by the Falcons in defiance of those who say running backs shouldn't go that high, showed his versatility by taking a swing pass for an 11-yard touchdown.

He also broke off a 21-yard dash that set up Atlanta's go-ahead TD: Tyler Allgeier's 3-yard run in the opening minute of the fourth quarter.

Allgeier added a clinching touchdown on another 3-yard run with just under five minutes remaining.

Desmond Ridder couldn't get much of anything going in the deep passing game for the Falcons. He was sacked four times and finished 15 of 18 for just 116 yards.

## COMMANDERS 20, CARDINALS 16

**LANDOVER, Md.** (AP)—Sam Howell threw a touchdown pass and ran for another score to make up for two turnovers and Washington rallied to beat Arizona in its first game under new ownership.

In front of a sellout crowd and with several prominent alumni back to celebrate the start of a new era, the Commanders were sloppy with a pair of turnovers and several penalties along the offensive line that allowed Howell to be sacked six times.

Washington's defense eventually took over and made game-changing plays. Montez Sweat strip-sacked Joshua Dobbs early in the fourth quarter to set up Howell's go-ahead 6-yard TD run, and Abdullah Anderson recovered another fumble by Arizona with under five minutes left.

Howell had a jittery start in his new role as the Commanders' starting quarterback, going 19 of 31 for 202 yards with a 7-yard TD pass to Brian Robinson Jr. and an interception. The second-year pro bounced back from the pick and a fumble late in the second quarter that handed the Cardinals a touchdown, completing four of seven passes after halftime.

# Germany wins Basketball World Cup for 1st time, holds off Serbia

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Have a summer, Germany. Dirk Nowitzki went into the Basketball Hall of Fame, and now his homeland stands atop the men's international basketball world.

Tournament MVP Dennis Schroder scored 28 points, Franz Wagner added 19 and Germany capped off an unbeaten run through the World Cup by holding off Serbia 83-77 in the final on Sunday night. It was Germany's first World Cup title; its previous top showing in the event was a bronze at Indianapolis in 2002.

AP

Germany celebrates with the trophy after winning the championship game of the Basketball World Cup against Serbia in Manila, Philippines, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023.

Germany went 8-0 in the tournament, becoming the fifth consecutive World Cup champion to go unbeaten. Schroder's postgame news conference was briefly interrupted by his teammates, who doused him with water as they jumped and chanted in celebration.

"It's an unbelievable group," Schroder said. "It's unbelievable going 8-0."

Germany coach Gordie Herbert took the job in 2021, and his first official order of business was driving to see Schroder. They spent three or four hours together that first day, building a relationship that is now good as gold.

"It's a little bit of a surreal moment," Herbert said. "It's like I told the players. It's a tremendous group of players, but we were a team first. Guys cared about each other and they challenged each other."

Aleksa Avramovic scored 21 and Bogdan Bogdanovic added 17 for Serbia (6-2), which lost the title game for the second time in the last three tournaments. It was routed by the U.S. 129-92 in the 2014 gold-medal game, and little was expected of the team this summer,merely because its best player, Nikola Jokic of the NBA champion Denver Nuggets, decided not to play and instead opted to rest for the coming season.

## MHS

*From page 20*

In the individual boys standings, MHS' Pony Tang came in first at 18:24; 2nd was Simon Tang from SSHS at 18:30; and third was MHS' Anthony Bergancia at 18:48.

In the girls individual standings, SIS' Kaithlyn Chavez dominated with a time of 21:01; second place was Kagman High School's Pia Ngewakl at 23:59; and third place was SIS' Aubrey Castro at 25:08.

SIS also won first place in the middle school girls division with 34 points; second place was Grace Christian Academy with 34 points; and third place was Dan Dan Middle School with 46 points.

And in the middle school boys division, only Mount Carmel School had enough runners.

First place in the individual standings for the middle school boys was SIS' Quido Jambor at 13:46; second place was Kasuki Kamagai of GCA with 15:26; and third place was Yuxi Lu of DMS at 15:51.

SIS' Adalee Taflinger was first in the middle school girls individual standings with a time of 14:47; second place was Leilani Ruszala of SIS with 16:20; and third place was Sarah Lim from GCA at 17:24.

SIS swept both the boys and girls division of the elementary school races and the individual races.

Dr. Ron Snyder, SIS' headmaster and coach and meet director, said of SIS' performance, "I am hopeful for our MS boys team. We had one athlete traveling and one athlete out sick but they should both be back in running form by the Gecko 5000, our third competition."

But regardless of the results, he said he was proud as a coach "for the spirit and energy that my team showed. Despite the rain, they were out there cheering on their fellow Geckos and friends from other schools. That is what this sport is all about!"

The next qualifier is Saturday, Sept. 16, hosted by Run Saipan at the American Memorial Park; the SIS Gecko 5000 at Banzai Cliff is on Sept. 30; the Kagman High School Invitational at ChaCha Ocean View Middle School is on Oct. 7; and the championship is set for Oct. 14 at the Saipan Country Club at Saipan Vegas.

LEIGH GASES

The Saipan International School boys and girls cross country teams take a photo before the start of the first qualifier of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 season at the CPA Airport Field last Saturday morning.

## CHAMPIONSHIPS

*From page 20*

I make mental notes of stretching routines, warm ups, drills, etc. and pick the ones I think will benefit my swimmers."

"There is always something new to learn," said Sikkel.

When asked what's next for CNMI's aquaholics, Sikkel said they are preparing for the 2023 Pacific Games. He said, "We are bringing a large group of swimmers and for half of them this would be their first big race. So, getting them ready to race in the Solomons is our next focus. We rely on the experienced swimmers to help guide the younger swimmers with all the race prep."

Sikkel met Cindy Vura, a technical official in the event, and also met with Team Solomon Islands during the championships. Vura is also officiating the Pacific Games. On their last day, the CNMI team watched the finals, took photos with other swimmers, swapped caps, and shirts.

Sikkel then thanked the Pacific Islands Club Saipan for the use of their lap pool, the Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation for their support and guidance, and World Aquatics for organizing the event, and the hundreds of volunteers who made them feel welcome.

For Thompson, she said the competition was an amazing experience. "I'm glad to say that I broke PB's in all of my events. I'm only more motivated now to compete in future events and get faster."

The Marianas High School student said that going into the competition, she wasn't sure if she would beat any of her previous records because over the summer, she missed a month of training due to being off island for a program called National History Academy.

"When I came back, I was not conditioned and struggled to get back to where I was before I left. However, with the help of my coach I managed to get back my speed and gave all I had in each of my races," she said.

She then thanked her family for pushing her to do her best, her coaches Christian Villacrusis, Sikkel, and her teammates.

Akimaru, for his part said, "Overall the competition went really well, I was able to beat all my personal bests. I felt really good during my practices before the races and I was confident that I would beat my personal best. Still, I was sad I couldn't reach the national record for my 50m freestyle. Just need to practice more."

Akimaru broke his personal best in the 100m butterfly with a time of 1:00.95, which was good for third in the heat overall. His previous PB was 1.02.70. In the 50m freestyle, he clocked in at 25.69 seconds for third place in the heat. His previous PB was 26.02 seconds; and in the 100m freestyle, he finished at 56.42 seconds.

For Thompson, she broke her PB in the 100m freestyle with a time of 1:08.52, with her previous PB of 1:09.45; She also recorded a new PB in the 50m butterfly with a time of 34.59 seconds. Her previous PB was 35.47 seconds.

She also recorded 40.10 seconds in the 50m breaststroke, 1:08.52 in the 100m Freestyle, and 31.03 seconds in the 50m freestyle.

Pajarillaga, on the other hand, broke the CNMI 200m backstroke record with a time of 2:16.69; competed in the 100m backstroke and finished with a time of 1:02.94; in the 50m backstroke, clocked in at 28.67; and in the 100m freestyle, he clocked in at 56.20.

## LA

*From page 20*

said of the girls' skills and performance during their session last Saturday.

She said she loves that they work together and that the team effort that they show is important. "You've got to have that ultimate goal—and whatever you can bring to your team to help you be successful, that's really important," said the basketball Olympian silver medalist from Australia.

The Level 2 coach said that the girls' strength is their communication and how vocal they are on the court, while their weaknesses at the moment are their shooting techniques. "When you ask them what do you focus on when you shoot the ball, the common answer is 'the basket.' But I'm like well, 'what part of the basket—you need to be looking at the back of the ring, the front, the middle, and looking at the backboard," she said.

"I think that's something that just comes down to the fundamentals and there are some things that they need to work on fundamentally, which I think will help improve their overall game," said the retired WNBA player.

Marlene Lumabi, coach of the U17 girls team, said she wanted the team to be around La Fleur as much as they could so she could instill the changes she saw fit. Lumabi said La Fleur ran the first clinic on Tuesday and then let her run the second one on Saturday so she could be given pointers.

Lumabi said that she ran most of the drills and used the coaching pointers La Fleur gave them of "you want to train like you're playing a game, so when you get into an actual game, it becomes easier."

"So, that's something I'm trying to implement with our girls and reminding them: they have to play game like now, make mistakes now—so when we get on the court, they know what to do." And with drills, Lumabi said "you have to do a build-up… The transition play that I ran, we ran this in our U15—which the majority of my girls were from that squad. So, they were familiar with how to do the transition. But we had a few that just joined this year, so we wanted to teach them now, because we're in the off-season, and when we do go in season, that's already instilled in them. When I say 'okay, we're going to transition,' they already know what to do."

Yasmeen Younis, captain of the U17 national girls team, said that "With the clinic today with coach Annie, I think that she's really helping out the CNMI with our basketball program, the NMIBF, and helping grow our foundation, and that it would really help us get out there."

The Saipan Southern High School senior said that La Fleur helped them with their fundamentals and that "It really helped us get our feet up there and really put our head in the game."

As for co-captain Destiny Pangelinan, she said that she learned a lot from the clinics with La Fleur. "She taught us that basketball is really about the fast tempo. The more upbeat the game is, the more your team can perform. Just outperform the other teams when your energy is up and your IQ is there and everything," said the point-guard.

What impacted her the most from La Fleur's clinic was to never get comfortable. "If we get a drill, and we start getting good at it, she'll throw something else at us and always keep us on our toes. You know, never getting comfortable—and that's all like what basketball is all about—just adapting."

La Fleur also hosted a scrimmage with boys from the Madflex and Rollers team Saturday morning and an open scrimmage last Sunday.

Djokovic wins the US Open for 24th Grand Slam title.

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Sports

Germany wins Basketball World Cup for 1st time, holds off Serbia.

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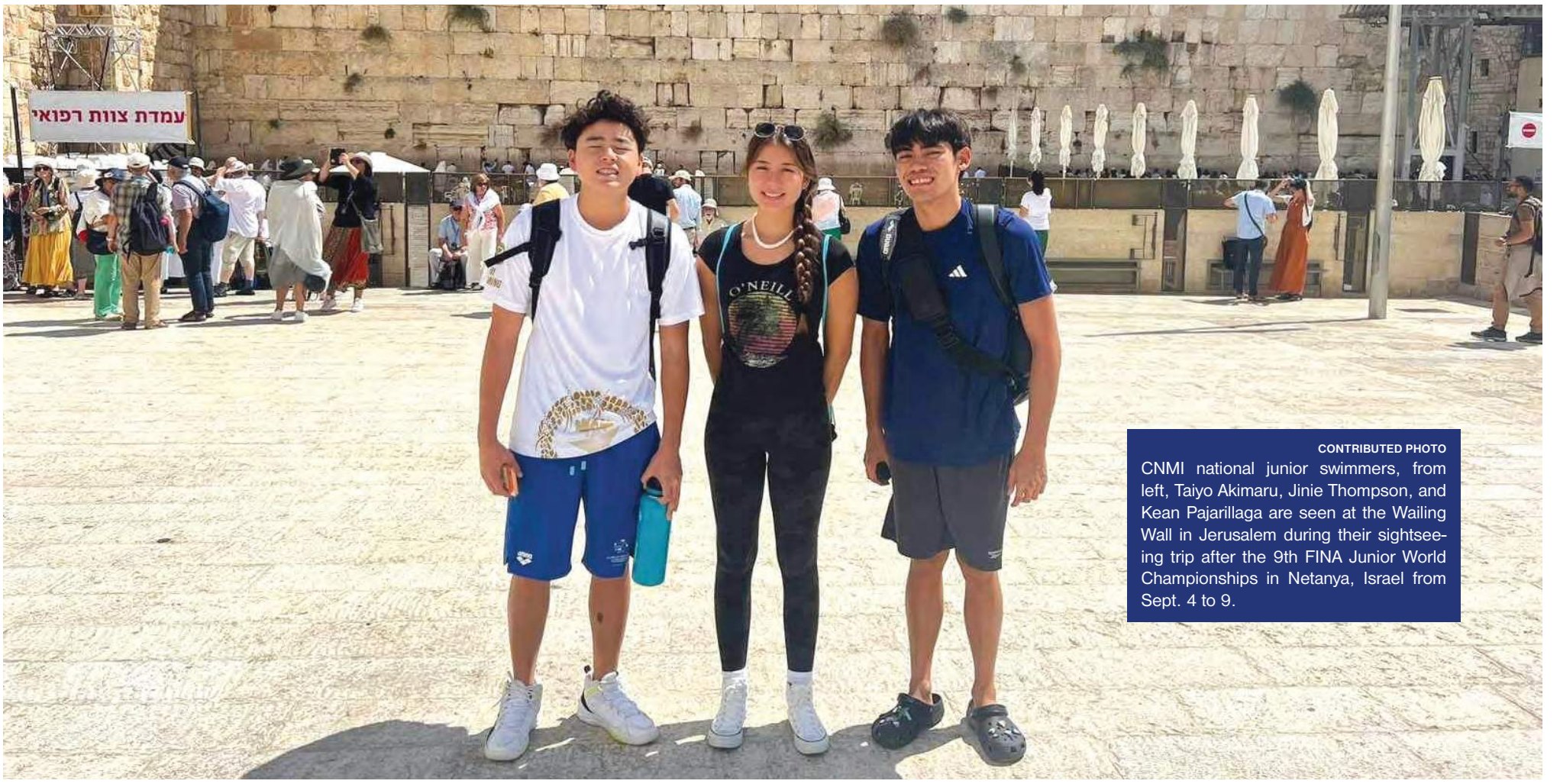
# ‘Championships was very successful’



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI national junior swimmers, from left, Taiyo Akimaru, Jinie Thompson, and Kean Pajarillaga are seen at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem during their sightseeing trip after the 9th FINA Junior World Championships in Netanya, Israel from Sept. 4 to 9.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

High praises were given by CNMI national swim team head coach Richard Sikkel to the three CNMI national junior swimmers—Taiyo Akimaru, Jinie Thompson, and Kean Pajarillaga—who competed and broke their personal bests in the 9th FINA Junior World Championships in Netanya, Israel from last Sept. 4 to 9.

Sikkel said that “the championships was very successful. All three swimmers set all new PBs or new times for the [long course 50m].”

The trio swam against the best junior swimmers in the world—and although they didn’t come home with medals, they broke their personal bests and have gained experiences they are able to use in future competitions.

Sikkel said what the swimmers will take away from the competition is the “experience, figuring out how to best prepare for a race, the pre-race jitters, how to build a race, and enjoying their time together as a team and top swimmers their age.”

For Sikkel himself, he said it’s “the opportunity to pick other coaches’ brains and watching how their swimmers train and prepare for their races is valuable information for me that I can apply back on Saipan.

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## La Fleur wraps up hoops clinics with CNMI junior national program

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Annie La Fleur, FIBA Oceania National Federation and Sport Development manager, has made the most of her more than one week stay in the CNMI and has wrapped up basketball clinics for the CNMI Junior National Girls program.

The two-session clinics were all done at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium in collaboration with the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation.

“There’s a couple of really good players out there. They’re very athletic. There’s a mixture of girls that are just starting out and there’s girls that have been around for a while,” Le Fleur

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LEIGH GASES

Participants of the CNMI Junior National girls program basketball clinic pose for a photo with FIBA Oceania National Federation and Sport Development manager Annie La Fleur, far left, last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

## MHS, SIS top HS cross country qualifier

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Battling the elements, proceeding with caution, but also running for the top spot was the name of the game in the first PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 qualifier as runners tore up the course of the CPA Airport Field last Saturday morning.

When all the mud, rain, and sweat cleared, Marianas High School and Saipan International School came out on top of their respective divisions.

In the high school boys division, the Dolphins topped it with 13 points; second place was SIS with 46 points; third place was Saipan Southern High School with 53 points; and fourth place was Mount Carmel School with 53 points.

The Lady Geckos topped the high school girls division with 12 points; and the Lady Dolphins came in second with 27 points.

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LEIGH GASES

The Marianas High School boys and girls cross country teams pose for a photo before the start of the first qualifier of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 season at the CPA Airport Field last Saturday morning.